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Volume 38, Number 10

OCTOBER 1975

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A Peek in the Publisher's Poke

HIS MONTH Desert is pleased to introduce Andy Dagosta, in a second of a series on artists who belong to the American Indian and Cowboy Artists Society. Andy's colorful cover painting, "Shorty's Tall Tale," won him honorable mention at last year's Death Valley Invitational Show which is a special feature of the '49er Encampment held each November. Andy works in several mediums and a select group of watercolors, acrylics and oils, including the cover painting, are on display in our Book Shop, along with other fine paintings of

the West.

October also heralds the Eighth Annual National Prospectors and Treasure Hunters Convention being held this year in Pioneertown, California on October 4th and 5th. This fun-filled weekend is the result of a lot of hard work by the members of the Prospector's Club of Southern California. Metal detector contests (in four different classes), gold panning for young and old, dry washing contest plus the latest in prospecting and treasure hunting equipment make this a great time for the whole family in an old western town setting. Make it a must on your calendar and we'll look forward to seeing you there.

The Orange County Chapter Associated Blazers of California has chosen the restoration of the Marshal South adobe on Ghost Mountain (see Desert, May '75) as a conservation project. The plan is to clean up the area, repair the roof, place a commemorative marker and put the house in a state of "arrested decay." This will take many man-hours and considerable expenditure. The above non-profit four-wheel-drive group is providing all the labor, but they are soliciting donations to cover the cost of materials.

For those interested in contributing to this worthwhile cause, address all donations and queries to:

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Marshall South was a major contributor to *Desert Magazine* in the early '40s, and had a huge following. We are delighted about the enthusiasm for this project and will keep the readers informed on its progress, with a feature article scheduled on its completion.

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Received a note from our friend, Nell Murbarger, author of "Ghosts of the Glory Trail," "Ghosts of the Adobe Walls," and others, that she has donated her entire collection of materials to the Nevada State Historical Society in Reno. Included in the 94 cases of material was a complete set of *Desert Magazines* from Volume 1, Number 1, to date.

For ghost town enthusiasts, as well as western history scholars, the Murbarger Collection represents an invaluable source of information, according to Historical Society sources.

Desert/October 1975

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LEANIN' TREE



OLD FORTS OF NORTHERN ARIZONA

by JOE KRAUS

If you drive out Northern Arizona way, out where the land gets a little wider, where civilization still hasn't spoiled the terrain, you'll come to an area filled with surprises. Rolling hillsides, picturesque ranches and island forests surrounded by colorful deserts are all a part of the view. And here and there a stray cow and her calf will look up, stare a moment, and then continue



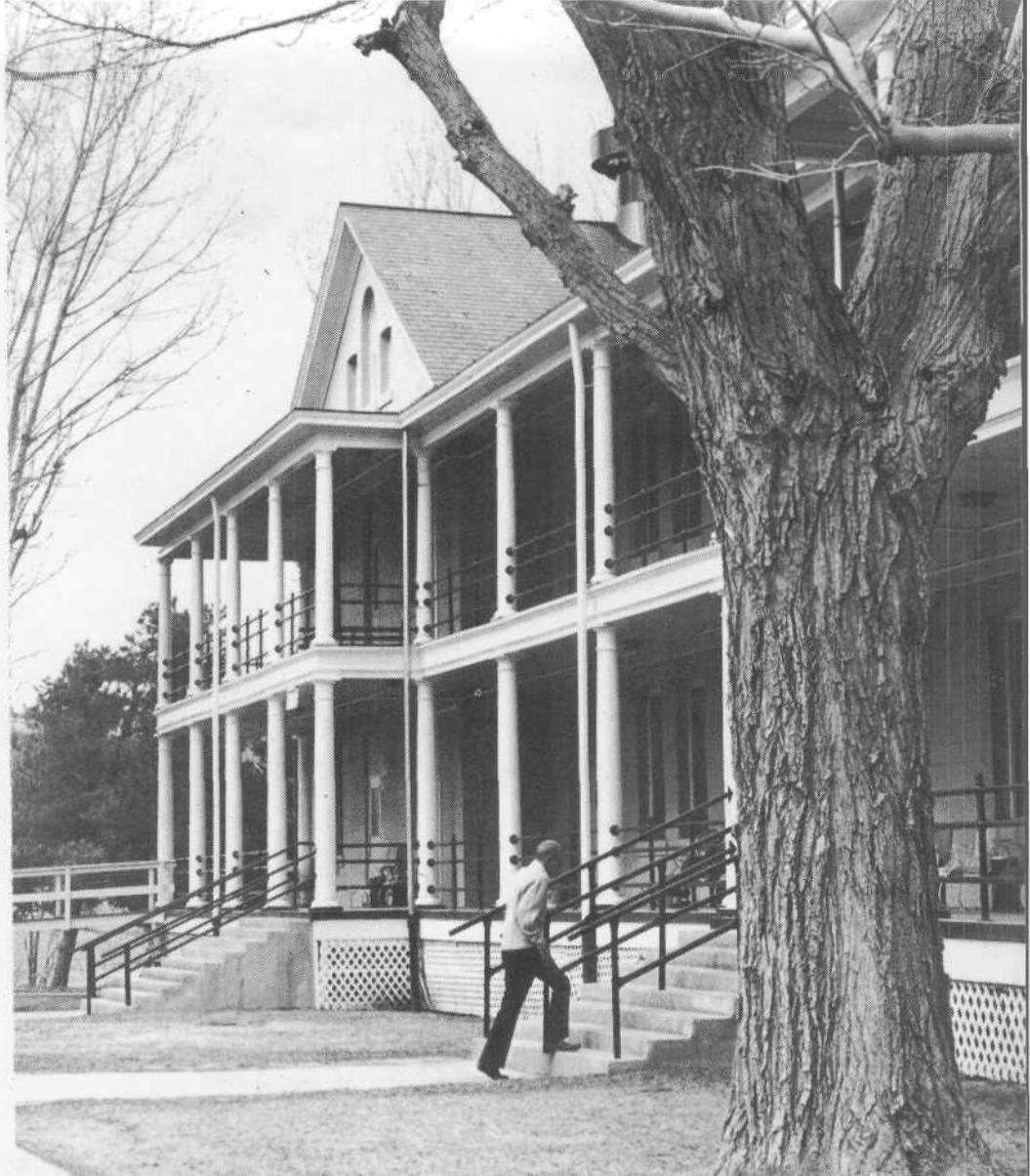
Left: The Camp Verde Cavalry returns every year during the annual Camp Verde Day celebration held every October. A barbecue, Indian and can can dancing, a rodeo and a melodrama performance are also included in the public celebration at the fort.

munching on the fresh grass. It's all a part of the scene today.

A hundred years ago it wasn't much different. Many of the trails (although now dirt roads or paved highways) were still there. The trees were there as were the ranches and settlers. The area, however, had a few extras—renegade Indians, meandering bandits and blue uniformed cavalrymen.

Few early settlements were complete without a military fort nearby. And Northern Arizona, or to be more specific, that area north of the Gila and Salt Rivers, sported nearly a dozen forts. They had such names as Fort Defiance, Fort Canby, Fort Mojave and Fort McDowell. And they played a most important part in the winning of the West. Today, however, most of these forts have all but disappeared. In their place are only the outlines of where buildings once stood. In front stands a lonely historical marker.

Four of the early forts, however, still stand. And each and every one have a



Above: Old barracks buildings at Fort Whipple are now used as domiciliaries at the Veterans Administration Hospital. Left: Two young Indian girls file by as young braves [left] engage in a ceremonial dance. The occasion was the annual Fort Verde Day celebration.



great deal to offer the visitor today. Two of the old forts, Pipe Spring and Camp Verde, are both remarkably preserved. The first is a national monument, the second a state historical park. The other two forts have many of their original buildings, but their sites have been converted to other uses. One, Fort Whipple, is now a Veterans' Administration Hospital. The other, Fort Apache, is now a boarding school for Indian children.

PIPE SPRING

Pipe Spring lies in a section of land that Arizona never really wanted and tried unsuccessfully to give to the State of Utah. And although Pipe Spring is a fort—it was never attacked.

It is located in the Arizona Strip, that section of land north of the Grand Canyon, 15 miles southwest of Fredonia, Arizona. Now administered by the Department of the Interior as a national monument, guide service is provided daily at the fort from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.



Historic grinding wheels remain outside the main walls at Pipe Spring, the best preserved of the old forts in Northern Arizona.

The main attraction is a well-preserved Mormon fort complete with interior furnishings and exterior wagons and materials.

The discoverers of Pipe Spring were a group of Mormon missionaries to the Indians. Led by Jacob Hamblin, they camped at the spring in the autumn of 1858 while en route to the lands of the Hopi Indians. Tradition says that the place derived its name from a shooting incident that occurred at this time. William "Gunlock Bill" Hamblin shot the bottom out of a smoking pipe to demonstrate his marksmanship, hence the name Pipe Spring.

In 1870, President Brigham Young of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints (Mormon) decided to establish a ranch for the raising of cattle and production of dairy products for the nearby settlements. Anson Perry Winsor was appointed to superintend the ranch and build a fort at Pipe Spring to protect the families and other workers. Never attacked, it served as a ranchhouse until 1923 when it became a national monument. Today, the fort still protects a clear running spring and provides the visitor with a good picture of the life and culture of the times.

FORT WHIPPLE

Near the edge of downtown Prescott, Arizona, just over the hill from Yavapai College, nestles Fort Whipple, a grassy, shaded place curtained off by hills from

the rest of the city's view. Built to protect Prescott and the Arizona Territory from raiding Indians, it has withstood time and change to continue today in a new vein as a Veterans Administration hospital.

But in the 1800s, it was a tired old Indian that occupied the fort's time. And that Indian's name was Geronimo, the last of the feared Indian leaders. Geronimo was a frequent visitor to what is now Yavapai County. And today, in the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness area near Clarkdale, one of the Indian leader's favorite hideouts can still be visited.

It was General George Crook, an early day commander at Fort Whipple, who played a major part in the Indian's capture. And no sooner had Geronimo been placed in the protective custody of the U.S. Cavalry than government officials in Washington declared the old Fort Whipple and others like it in the Arizona Territory had served their usefulness. Many were abandoned as a result.

The fort was initially set up in Chino Valley, a few miles to the north, on December 23, 1863 and then moved to its present location in May, 1864. Its first commander was Major Edward B. Willis. The post served the Arizona Territory through some of its most gallant years. It was reactivated during the Spanish-American War and World War I. This was followed with the transformation from a fort to a veterans hospital.

Many of the old buildings, however, still remain.

Besides visiting the old barracks buildings (now used as domiciliaries) one can walk about the grounds and absorb much of the history of the post. Of special interest is officers row, where military brass once lived, now the homes of doctors and hospital officials.

CAMP VERDE

Early in January, 1865, nine men left Prescott on horseback seeking a suitable farming area in the Verde Valley. Returning to Prescott to outfit their project, they added 10 other settlers to their party and made their journey again, this time to establish a settlement where Clear Creek joins the Verde River. But life was not easy and the settlers were continually harassed by raiding bands of Apache Indians. To help the settlers, a detail of 16 men was sent from Fort Whipple.

The settlement grew and prospered, but the Indian raids continued despite help from the cavalry. So to provide more protection a permanent fort was established in the area under the command of Captain H. S. Washburn. But the original site wasn't suitable and the buildings were never completed. So the fort moved in the spring of 1871 to its present location and the name changed from Camp Lincoln to Camp Verde.

In its heyday two troops of cavalry and two companies of infantry inhabited the fort. And their main target was Apache Indian bands under the command of their famed leader Geronimo. Much of the fighting was in the hills and mountains around the valley. It wasn't until Geronimo's surrender in 1885 that hostilities ceased and peace came to the valley. And so with no further need of the army, Camp Verde was abandoned on April 25, 1891.

Today, much of the original fort remains just as it looked in earlier days, and visitors can tramp around the parade grounds, visit the officers' quarters and the main bunkhouse which is now a museum. Operated as an Arizona State Historical Park, the fort is open seven days a week. The old fort is located in the town of Camp Verde, 63 miles southeast of Prescott off the Black Canyon Freeway north of Cordes Junction.

Among exhibited items are a hat worn by the famous Apache chief, Geronimo, military uniforms worn by the cavalry-

men who chased the Indian warrior and a military medical chest containing the original bottles. A homespun American flag which dates back 100 years is also among the items exhibited as are spurs left behind 200 to 400 years ago by Spanish Conquistadores.

FORT APACHE

Visitors to Fort Apache will find many of the original buildings that were used in the fort's heyday 1870-1890 when the post served an important position during the Indian wars. Still standing are one of the four original barracks,, the adjutant's office, officers row, guardhouse, commissary, quartermaster warehouse and cavalry stables.

The old fort is located north of Globe near the present-day town of Fort Apache. The fort is now used by the Bureau of Indian Affairs as headquarters of the Fort Apache Indian Reservation and by the Theodore Roosevelt Indian School. It was named Fort Apache as a token of friendship to Cochise. The famed Apache chief visited the fort for several weeks in the 1870s. The post had earlier been called Camp Ord, Camp Mogollon and Camp Thomas. Abandoned as a military post in 1924, it was then turned over to the Indian Service to be used as a school.

In its early days, renegade groups under Geronimo, Nachez and others were pursued by troops from Fort Apache. Both Indian scouts from the fort and cavalry troopers tracked the hostiles through canyons and arroyos. Numerous confrontations caused a great deal of bloodshed on both sides. On several occasions the fort was ambushed by Indians, cavalry patrols massacred and couriers and civilians shot down in their travels to and from the fort. During one of the confrontations, the New York Times carried a three column account that read much like the battle at Little Big Horn five years before.

In recent years, Fort Apache has been the subject of several novels and motion pictures as well as a popular TV series. Novelists and screen writers portray the early days at Fort Apache with vividness and emotion. But none of it matches the experience of visiting there today. For here you can stroll over the old parade ground, walk through the old buildings and view the surrounding country that for the most part hasn't changed since the days of Cochise and Geronimo. □

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Desert GHOSTS

by HOWARD NEAL

Bodie, California

LOCATION: Bodie is located 13 miles east of Highway 395, near the Nevada border, 21 miles southeast of Bridgeport, California.

BRIEF HISTORY: Winter can be harsh on the eastern slope of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. The sentiment "Goodbye, God, I'm going to Bodie" says it all. In those mountains north of California's Mono Lake, the frigid winds boil down from the High Sierra and the snow piles deep on the barren highlands.

If the winter of 1860 was an exception, it was because it was colder than most. It was in March of that year that Bill Bodey died. He froze to death, buried deep in a snow drift, just a few miles from the site of the gold discovery that would make his incorrectly spelled name famous for two generations.

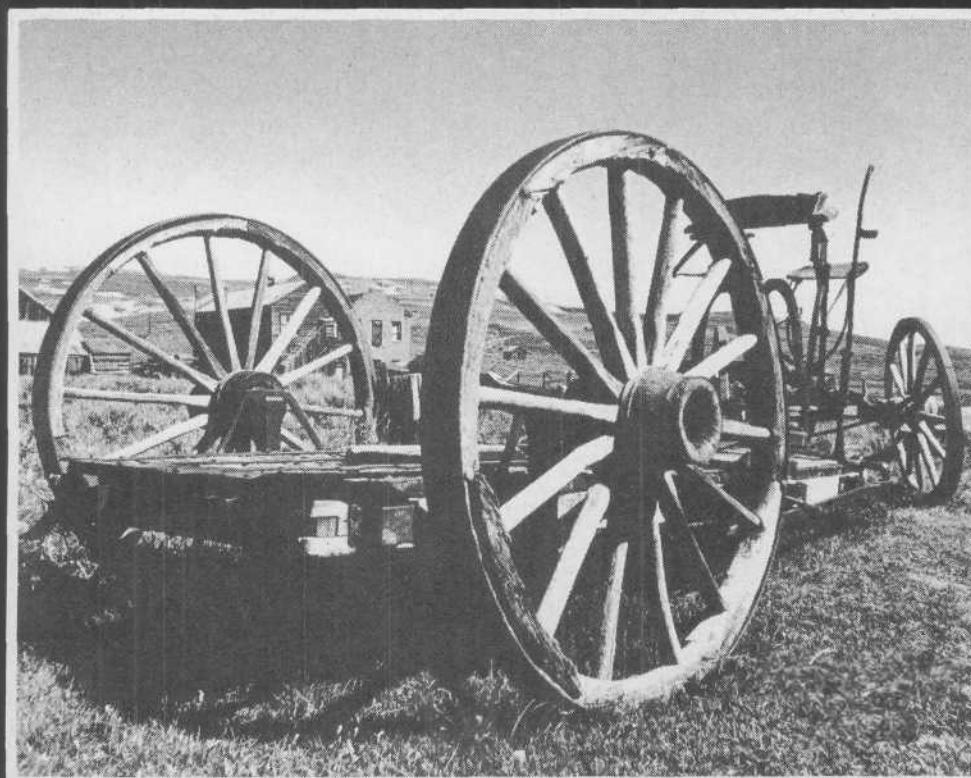
Legend tells us that Bodey's gold discovery was, like many, the result of pure chance. The story says that, in July of 1859, Bodey was out "prospect-

ing" for a rabbit, for dinner. He winged his prey, but the animal was not cooperative. The wounded rabbit went down its hole. Bodey, not to be denied, dug for his dinner, and he came up with much more than a meal. The ground was rich with gold.

For more than a decade the small mining camp named in Bodey's honor languished in the shadow of Aurora, center of the richer Esmaralda mining district, a few miles to the east. But, another twist of fate was to cause a boom at Bodie.

The ore at Bodie was low grade. Production was modest. Among the mines operating on a shoestring was the Standard. Its owners did not even have enough money for proper shoring. One morning, in 1874, when workers arrived, they discovered a cave-in. Bonanza! A rich chamber of ore was exposed. The word flashed across California and Nevada, and the gold rush was on!

Four years later, in 1878, another fabulous strike was made at another mine. A rich vein of gold and silver was discovered on the property of the Bodie Mining Company.

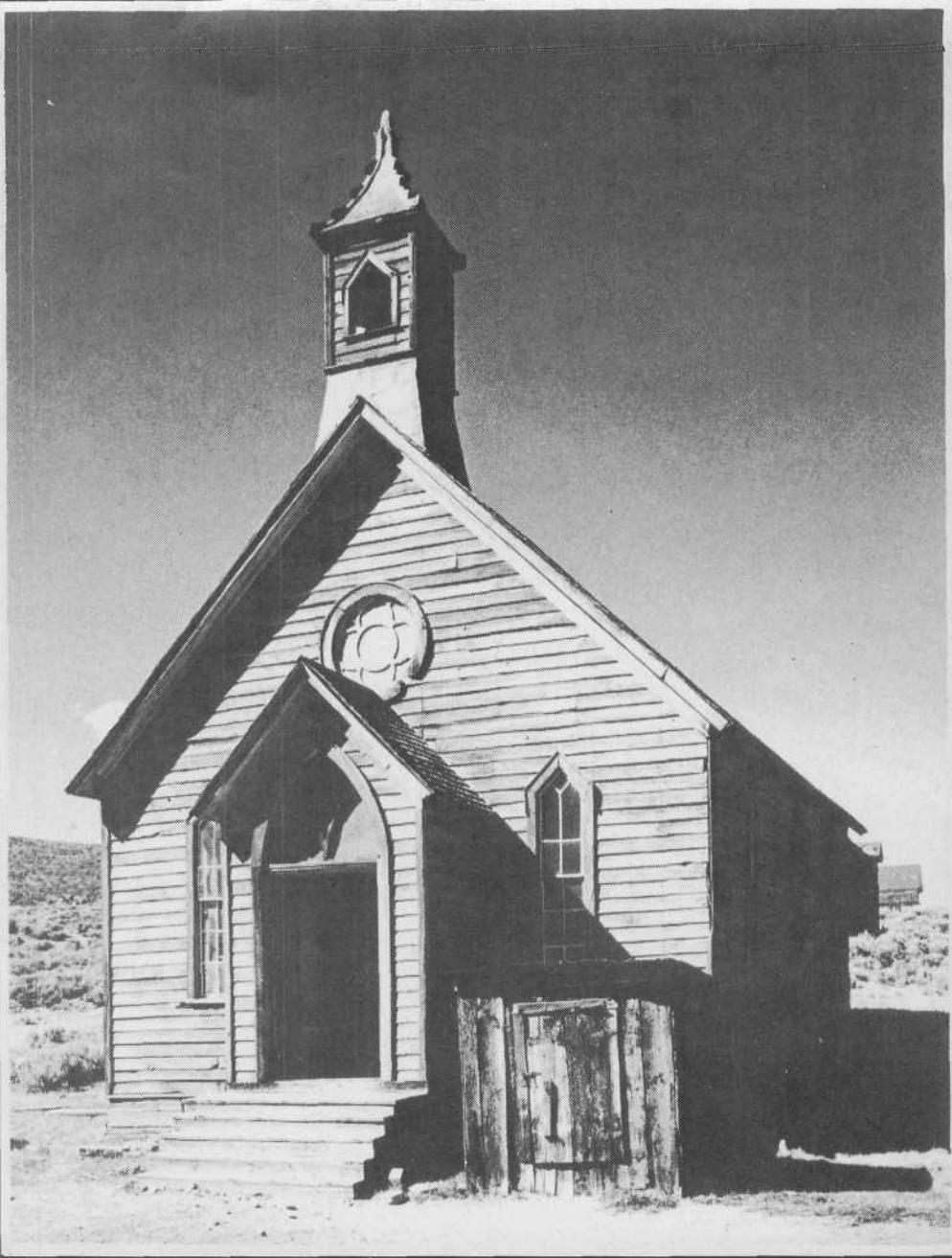


Examples of old wagons, ore cars, and mining machinery are among the objects that can be found along the streets in the townsite of Bodie. The town is being maintained as a State Historic Park in what is called a state of "arrested decay."

Photographs by Edward Neal.

Bodie's old Methodist Church was built in 1878 at the peak of the town's boom.

The only Protestant church ever erected in Bodie, it is the only church still standing among the dozens of historic buildings being protected by the State of California.



Production boomed, and the population of Bodie soared. The community that a few years before had been a sleepy little mining camp with a few hundred residents became a city with a population of more than 10,000. More than \$10 million was extracted from the Bodie hills between 1874 and 1881.

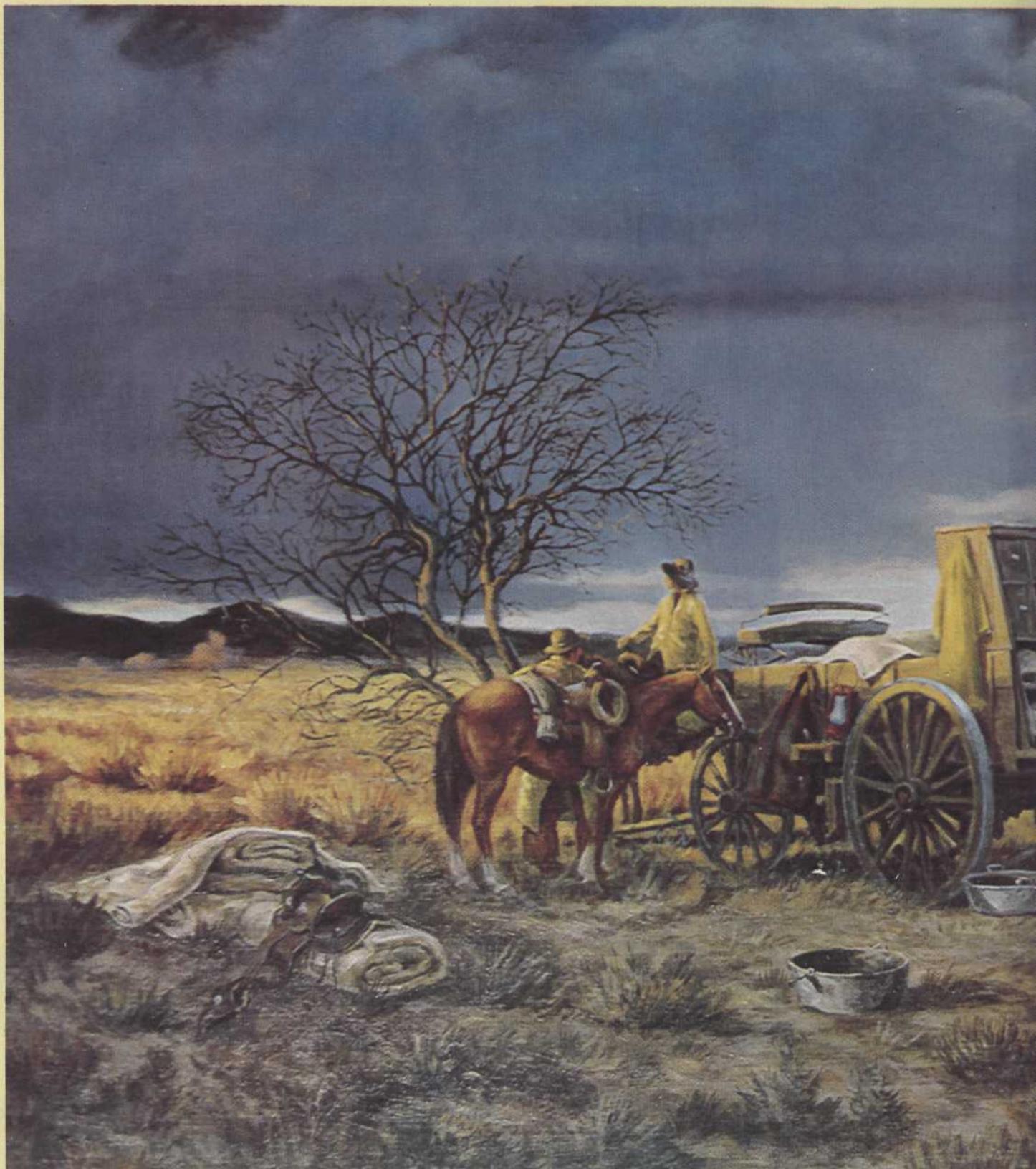
Mining towns seem to boom and bust. Bodie was no exception. The boom was quick and it was fantastic. The decline, orchestrated with mini-booms during a 30 year period, was slow and painful. In Bodie, a wooden town, the major pain was inflicted by fire. Both the population and the mine production dropped, except during short periods of prosperity, during the three decades from Bodie's peak until the start of its final decline in 1910. Fire though, was deadly. In July of 1892 there was a disastrous conflagration. And, in June of 1932, fire again struck. This time it was the final blow to a nearly abandoned city of the past. More than half

of the old business district was destroyed and a town once described as "a sea of sin, lashed by the tempests of lust and passion," went finally to its last resting place and became another ghost of the American west.

BODIE TODAY: The 13 miles of dirt road from Highway 395 are rough, and the trip takes nearly an hour. The journey is worth the effort, though. Bodie is a classic among ghost towns. A State Historic Park since 1962, Bodie is maintained by the few rangers who live in the community in what is called a state of "arrested decay." Dozens of buildings remain in various stages of disrepair protected against vandals by the rangers. Self-guiding tour books make the history of Bodie come alive for visitors, but commercialism has been avoided. Bodie is a protected ghost, but it is a true ghost . . . the must ghost for every true ghost towner. □

WESTERN ART

Dagosta[®]



MICHELANGELO ON HORSEBACK



IOU WON'T see Andy Dagosta's artistry in the Sistine Chapel. Or the Louvre, although it might well be should they have an exhibit of fine art on the American Old West. At least if his legion of fans, who have enshrined his paintings on their walls, have anything to say about it.

Although his techniques and style differ from that of the famous Florentine, Andy, too, is a meticulous craftsman of romantic realism. Before his brushes touch the canvas there are days, weeks, even longer, of patient and painstaking research for the authenticity that identifies a "Dagosta western."

If the picture is that of a boots 'n saddle cavalryman, you know that the uniform is authentic, right down to the kerchief, the equipment, the sweat-stained hat. If it is a desperado with rifle in hand, waiting in ambush, you can bet that the rifle model belonged to the scene and the time. The borderland cantina that he pictures may not be any specific one, but you will recognize it from countless counterparts right down to the aged, weather-beaten adobe, the unpainted and heat-cracked door, the very air of refuge from storm and loneliness.

Not only do Andy's paintings withstand the close scrutiny of Western buffs who tend to rate an artist by his western expertise as well as artistry, they reflect a feeling, a flair that comes only with a love of the land and its history.

Although the plains of Nebraska may now seem more midwest than one time frontier, it was back in his hometown of Omaha that the roots of Andy's fondness for the West took hold. But shortly after graduation from Omaha Tech, he wound

Photos by Frederick L. Richards

"Gonna Rain Like Hell"

From the collection of
Mr. & Mrs. Robert Haupt,
Los Angeles



"Obvious Intentions"

From the collection of
Mr. & Mrs. Jack
Whitehead,
San Marino, California

up with the 12th Air Force in Italy. Eventually, as with so many GIs, he settled in California, which was about as far West as he could get!

There is a suspicion, especially when viewing his paintings, that he might have been more "at home" riding the range of a cattle ranch, or in some small outpost where towns are few and far between and where history comes alive along dim and dusty trails. But a man must make a living, and art was Andy's means. After a year at Hollywood Art Center, burnishing off rusty army years,

he opened his well-known commercial art studio in Pasadena, California, in 1948.

But advertising art, however satisfying and profitable, is not the stuff of which dreams are made. It wasn't long before he was roaming the desert and those ever-beckoning mountains shimmering in the distance.

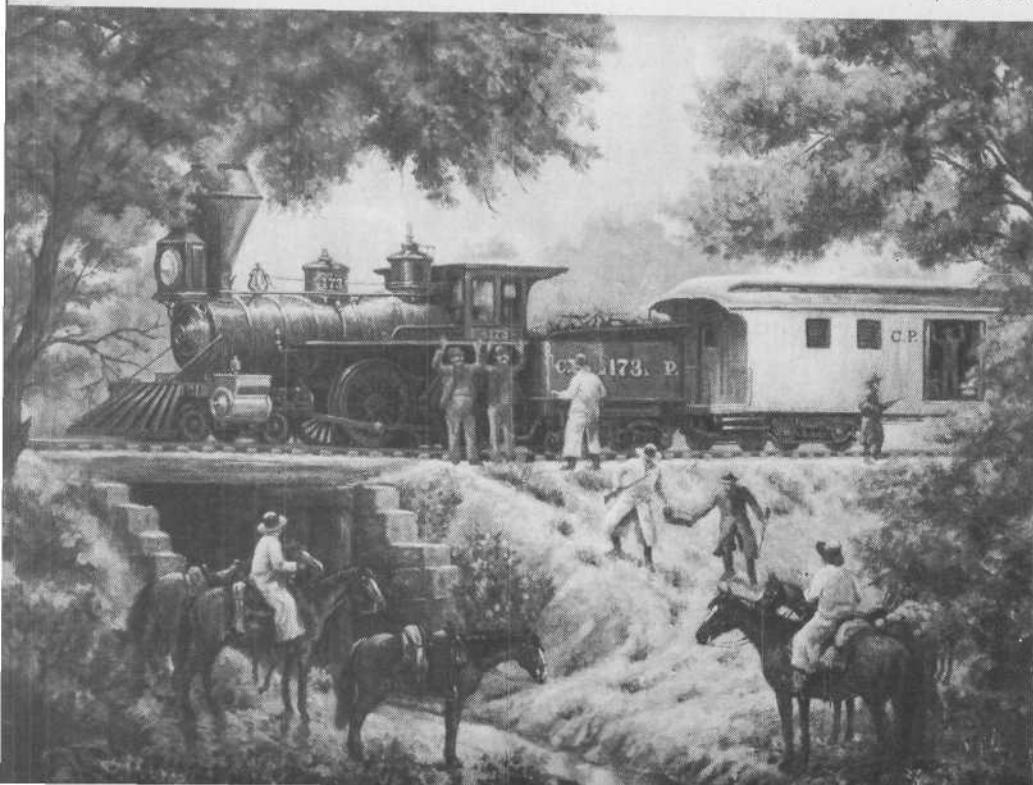
There is also a special camaraderie that develops among those wanderers of such enchanting lands and historic places. Inevitably, Andy joined The Westerners, a group bonded by common

interests and dedication to sharing their fascination for The Old West.

But like western trails themselves, the Westerners led to still another branching. That of the Death Valley '49ers, who hold their famed annual Encampments at Furnace Creek, nestled below Coffin Peak in the Funeral Mountains, each Fall. In company with fellow western artists such as Lloyd Mitchell, Bill Bender, Bob Wagoner and a host of other noted painters and watercolorists, Andy became an exhibitor in the Open Show of the art show that highlights the Encampments. An art show, to be noted, that is one of the finest nationally acclaimed exhibits of its kind. And, in 1970, he walked off with 1st Place!

He repeated the achievement in 1972. Two years later, in the special Invitational Show he won Honorable Mention, no small feat in the stiff competition.

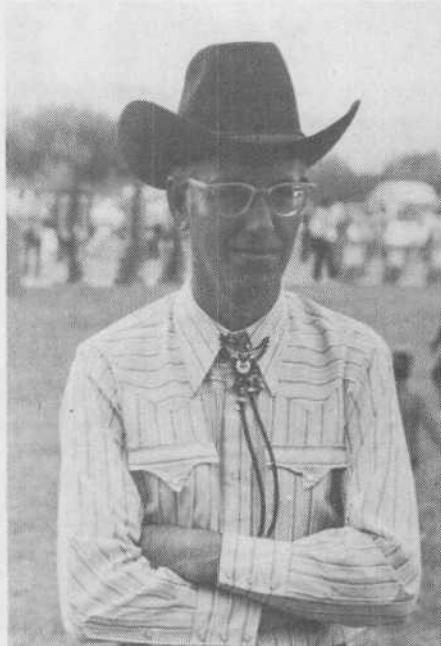
More than the actual awards, there is particular pride in these for the balloting is done by the thousands attending the Encampments. These are also people who know the West, who are exposed to much Western art, and they know what they like. They liked the Dagosta flair for recapturing our western heritage with familiarity and authenticity.



"173's Unscheduled Stop"

But you don't have to go to Death Valley to see Andy's paintings. They have been and are being exhibited at such fine galleries and exhibits as the Cattlemen's Convention in Las Vegas, the California Fine Arts Gallery of Pasadena, the Paul Metcalf Gallery in Pasadena, the San Gabriel Art Association's Art Festival, the Favell Museum in Oregon, the Peterson Gallery in Beverly Hills and the Chriswood Gallery in Temecula. And if you are a fine book fancier, you'll find Andy's art gracing one of the famous Westerner Brand Books, that of 1975 and already a collector's item.

Behind most successful men, helping to provide their inspiration, you will find a loyal and understanding family. Andy



Andy Dagosta

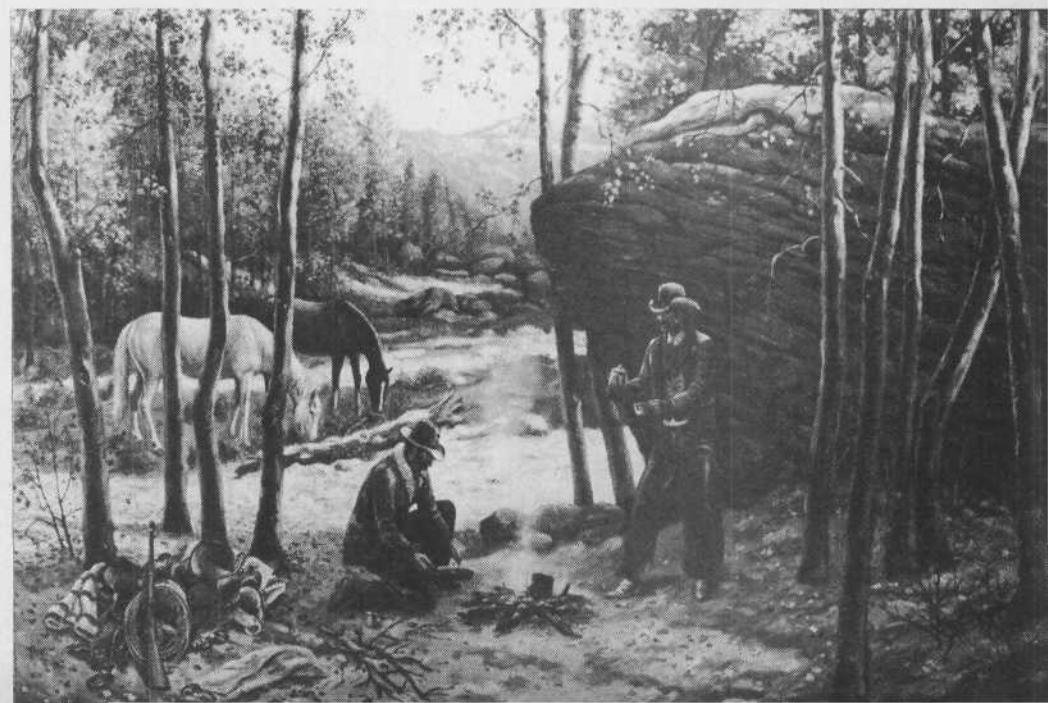
is no exception. His wife, Vernice, often shares his western wanderings. He also has two collegian daughters, Karen and Dianne. A third daughter, Debbie, who like Diane was an AAU major championship swimmer, now works for the county road department.

Glendale, California, where the Dagostas have their home, may not be the frontier that Andy so vividly portrays, but it is a close enough jumping-off point to the scenes you will savor so in his paintings. And, of course, it is handy to the Westerner meetings, the Death Valley Encampments, and the fine galleries who so proudly display the artistry of Andy Dagosta—a Michelangelo on horseback □



"Cavalry Scout"

"Coffee, Sowbelly, and Beans"
From the collection of Favell Museum, Salem, Oregon



PAINTED ROCKS ALONG THE GILA

ROM ITS SOURCE in the timbered heights of New Mexico to its confluence with the Colorado near Yuma, Arizona, the Gila River penetrates the very heart of the Southwest. Gila Cliff Dwellings, the San Carlos Apache reservation and the Casa Grande ruins are some of the better-known places of interest along or near its course; the San Simon, San Pedro, Santa Cruz, Hassayampa, and Salt are among its tributaries. From prehistoric times down through the days of Kino, Anza, American mountain men, and the Butterfield Overland Mail, human activity has flowed along this storied stream.

One of the Gila's lesser-known attractions is located in western Maricopa County, Arizona, not far from Gila Bend. Here, about three miles from the river, are the Painted Rocks, aboriginal glyphs now protected as a state historic park. The paved Painted Rock Road breaks north from Interstate Highway 8 some 14 miles west of Gila Bend. For 11 miles it works its way toward, and through, the low Painted Rock Mountains. Then a side road forks to the left, leading to the petroglyphs a fraction of a mile away; the main road continues on for another five miles to Painted Rock Dam on the Gila, an earth-fill barrier completed by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in 1959. Because of dam building along the Gila and its tributaries, and the needs of Arizona's expanding industry, agriculture, and population, the river is normally dry near Painted Rocks today.

"Painted" Rocks is really a misnomer, since the symbols are not picto-

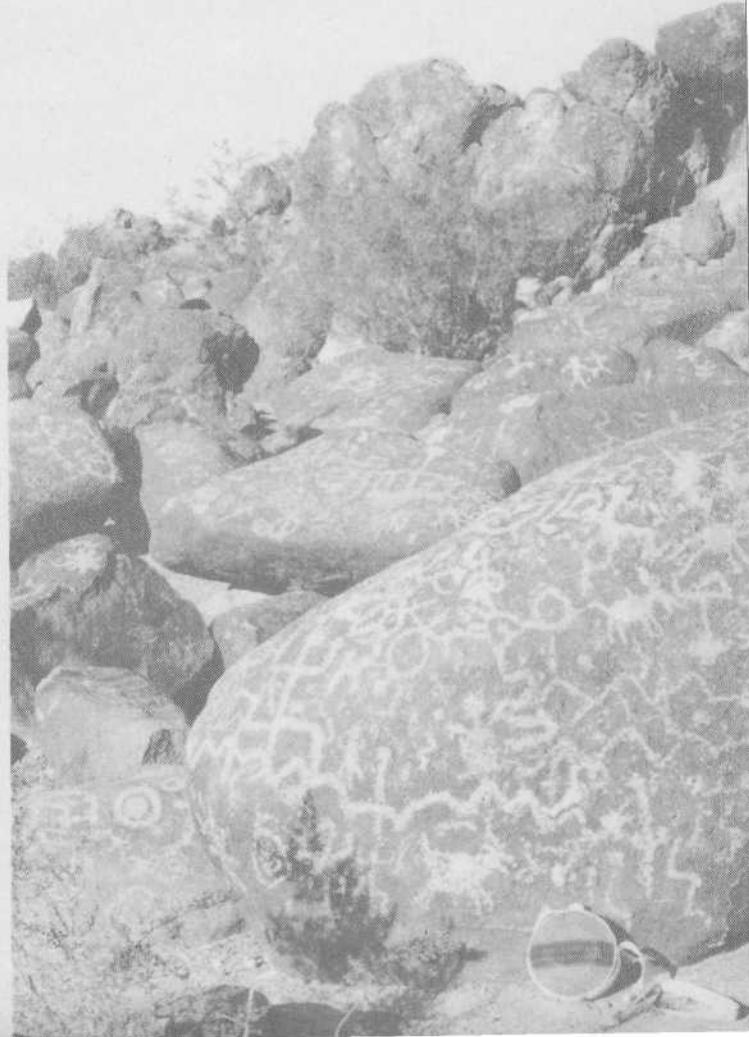
graphs painted on the surface, but petroglyphs cut into the rock. Thousands of markings cover a small blackish hillock on the edge of Dendora Valley near the Painted Rock Mountains. A few familiar shapes stand out, evidently portraying men, horses, bighorn sheep, lizards and snakes, but the significance of these glyphs and of the myriad abstract forms

is unknown. Some shallow grinding holes and an occasional potsherd add further interest to the site.

For many years the Painted Rocks lay along the mainstream of history — and prehistory — in the Southwest. The knoll was on the western rim of the ancient Hokokam (pronounced "Ho-ho-KAM") domain. The modern Pimas and Papagos may be descended, in part, from this gifted race of canal builders, whose name means "that which has vanished." That tireless missionary-explorer, Padre Eusebio Kino, passed the glyphs in 1700 while on a horseback journey from Sonora to the Colorado River. He was then 56 years old and averaged 40 miles per day on the expedition. In 1775 Juan Bautista de Anza led 240 California-bound settlers and large herds of livestock down the banks of the lower Gila;

by
**DICK
BLOOMQUIST**

Right: "Painted" Rocks is really a misnomer, since the markings are not pictographs painted on the surface, but petroglyphs cut into the rock. Opposite Page: Strange symbols, labyrinthine designs at Painted Rocks.





they became the first colonists to reach California by an overland route.

The first half of the nineteenth century saw American mountain men trapping beaver along the river. With the outbreak of the Mexican War in 1846 and the discovery of gold in California in 1848, soldiers, settlers, and forty-niners began moving west past Painted Rocks. General Kearny, Kit Carson, and the Army of the West came through in '46, followed later that year by the wagons of the Mormon Battalion. The Mormons tried to float part of their supplies down the lower Gila, but the two wagon bodies they had fashioned into a boat frequently ran aground on sand bars in the shallow channel. By lightening the load, however, the desert sailors eventually did reach the river's mouth.

The land north of the Gila, in what is now Arizona, passed from Mexico to the United States in 1848, but the territory south of the river, including the Painted Rocks, did not become American soil until the Gadsden Purchase of 1853. One year before the Purchase, a lone covered wagon was working its way westward along the Gila. In the emigrant family were Boyce Oatman, his wife, and seven

children. On the south side of the river, and some eight to 10 miles west of Painted Rocks, Apaches attacked the party, killing the parents and four of the children.

Fifteen-year-old Lorenzo Oatman was left for dead, and his two young sisters, Olive (about 14 years old) and Mary Ann (7 years old), were taken captive. Lorenzo recovered and reached civilization, then tried without success to find the girls, who before long were traded by the Apaches to the Mohaves. Mary Ann died among the Mohaves, but Olive survived. Finally, in 1856, she was brought in to Fort Yuma by a friendly Yuma Indian and reunited with her brother.

In the late 1850's and early '60's the coaches of the Butterfield Overland Mail rolled past Painted Rocks, but the onset of the Civil War soon ended the career of this celebrated stage line.

The coming of the railroad and the building of U.S. Highway 80 and Interstate 8 caused history to bypass the old Gila trail and its Painted Rocks. Now, however, with the creation of the state park and the nearby dam, travel is on the increase once again in this rewarding corner of the Southwest. □



THE BLACK WIDOW spider is found everywhere in the Southwest deserts—everywhere, from mesquite-held sand dunes to pinyon-covered mountains. She's abundant, too, with hundreds of tiny spiderlings emerging several times each year from the oval egg cases. That such a common spider may very well possess the most potent venom of any desert animal leaves one shuddering at the possibilities of an encounter.

Have no fear. Your chances of being struck by lightning are much greater than dying from the bite of a black widow. Odds are you'll never get bit in the first place. Black widows are a cowardly lot, retreating into some crevice or corner at the slightest sign of danger. They're sensitive to harsh treatment of their webs and know the difference between man and insect when either comes

in contact with the silken threads. Their venom, powerful as it is, works well offensively in subduing struggling insects. But defensively it is used only as a last resort, when other escape maneuvers fail. Black widows seldom, if ever, leave their web to go hustling about after dark looking for trouble.

Nevertheless, newspaper accounts occasionally do tell of persons being bitten by this half-inch arachnid. When the black widow strikes, the incident can become serious as nearly 10 persons each decade die from its effects. Many more are hospitalized with intense, localized pain, vomiting, and stomach cramps. Children and the elderly are especially susceptible. A five-year-old child once died within 24 hours after being bitten. The elderly may suffer additional complications due to heart trouble and decreased resistance.

The Black Widow

by JIM CORNETT

One incident involving a close friend and a black widow is a typical case in many ways. While looking under boards around an old mine, my friend placed his hand on top of a large female spider. The black widow inflicted two tiny, red wounds on his finger. Initially, he hardly realized he had been struck. Then 20 minutes later the pain became very intense and he vomited several times. He was taken to the hospital where they formally diagnosed the cause—a black widow bite. He remained in the hospital overnight, and his condition improved. After three days, his recovery was complete. This was only the first of three bites this individual received in the following four years! Each time the symptoms were the same.

It has been estimated by Dr. Willis J. Gertsch that four percent of those bites reported result in death. This should not cause alarm as the majority of cases go unreported. Each person reacts in a different manner and there are probably thousands of incidents which are never even noticed by the recipient. In addition there is great variability in the toxicity displayed by these spiders. Researchers Keegan, Hedden and Wittemore found the venom of *Latrodectus mactans* (the common black widow of the Southwest deserts) to be 10 times more potent in November than in April.



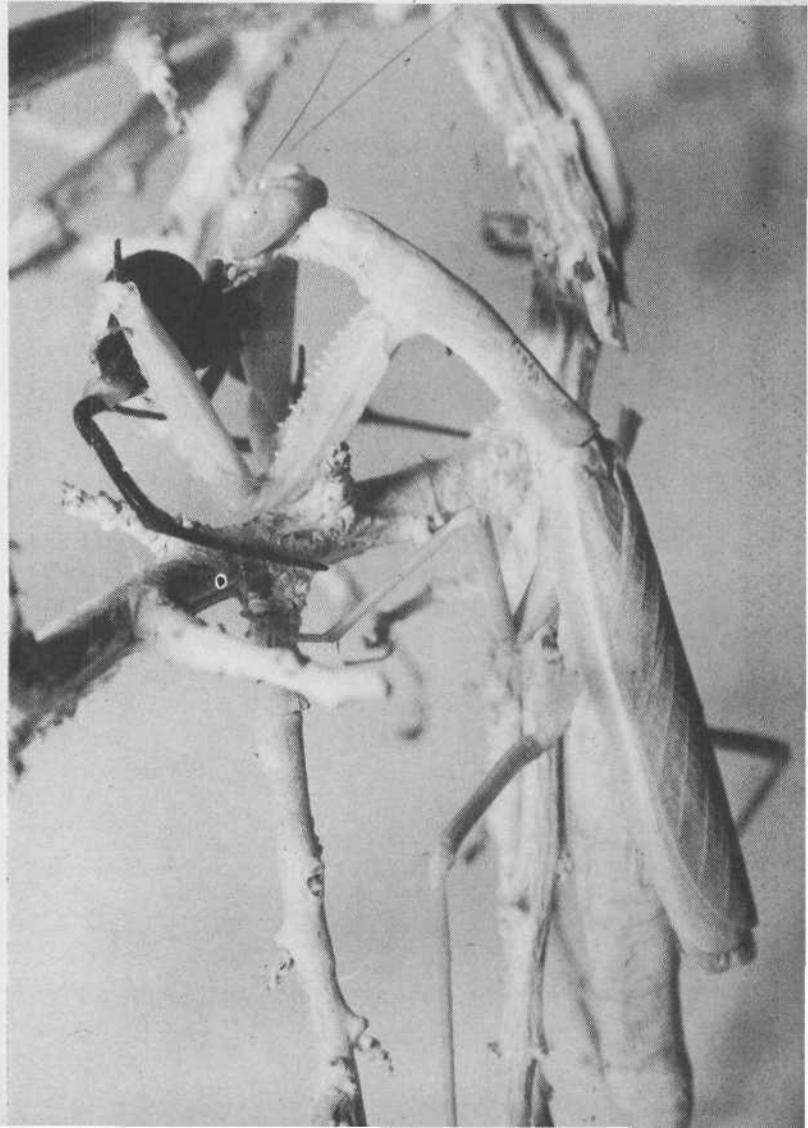
Black widows prefer dark environments well protected from wind and rain. Abandoned rodent holes, mine shafts, wood piles, and rock crevices are favored hiding places. Outhouses were once common homes for the widows as these buildings had all the necessary requirements—darkness, protection from the elements, and lots of flies on which the spiders fed. There are many cases on record where unsuspecting persons were bitten while using such infested facilities. Tender body parts would be pressed against the spider with a resultant bite. Males were especially prone to such incidents.

In the Southwest, black widows are typically glossy black with a conspicuous red hourglass pattern on the underside of their abdomen. The male spider, which unlike the female is not dangerous, is much smaller than his mate and colored light brown with much white flecking. The sexes are so different it is difficult to believe they are the same species.

The black widow gets her name from the alleged attack on her mate immediately after mating. Her mate killed, she is pronounced a widow—a black widow. Whether she actually becomes a widow depends entirely upon the male. The tiny male spider must leave her web as care-

Opposite Page:
The red hourglass
pattern on the
underside of the
female black
widow is her
trademark.
Above: The
female black
widow allegedly
has the most
potent venom of
any poisonous
desert animal.
Right: A black
widow is being
attacked and
devoured by a
large Praying
Mantis.

Continued on Page 46



SLUICING FOR GOLD

I OLD! MAN'S obsession with it has never waned since our prehistoric ancestors picked up a golden nugget in a primeval streambed. Down through the ages, the search for golden treasure has caused empires to rise and fall, figured in the discovery of continents and brought about the California Gold Rush—the greatest mass-migration for gold in history.

Even today, gold fever smolders in the hearts of many. Claims are still held in nearly every gold area by owners who are sure they will strike it rich someday. Few do, but hope never dies for the gold seeker. Numerous city-bound folks look forward to weekends and vacations when they can head for the backcountry to search for the "golden fleece" of their dreams.

There always seems to be a resurgence of interest in gold whenever our nation's economy undergoes periods of very good or very bad times. During the former, there is more opportunity to pursue one's pleasures. During the latter, it becomes a means of adding to the family funds. More than likely, "new" strikes will continue to be made, since geologists have long stated, "There is still far more gold

by
MARY FRANCES STRONG

photos by
Jerry Strong

in the ground than has ever been taken out."

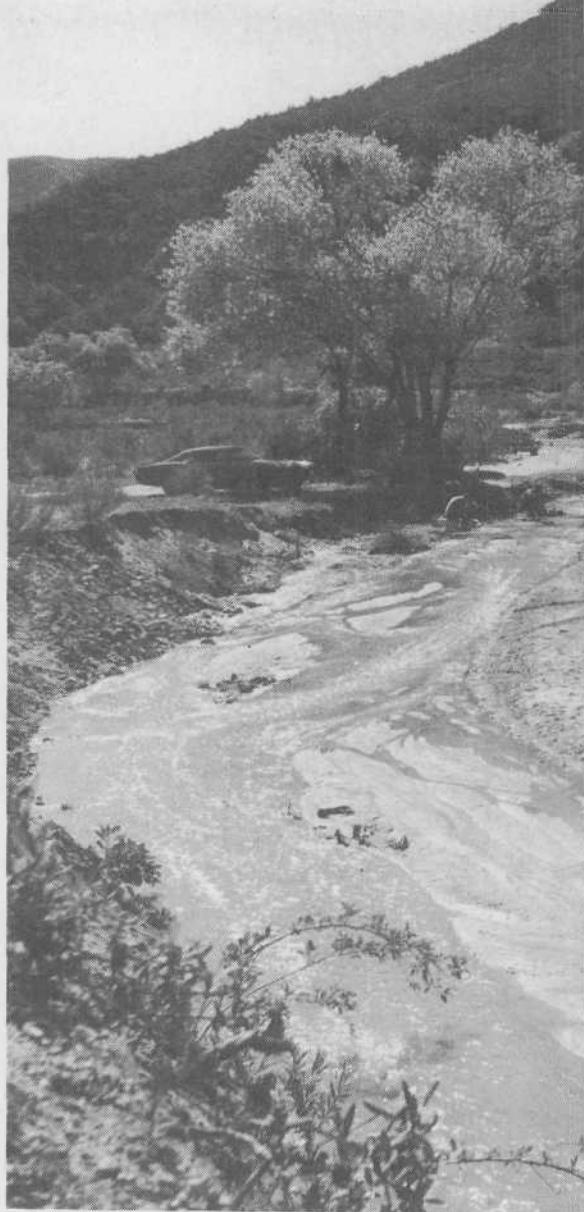
Gold hunting as a hobby has rapidly increased over the last two decades. This is largely due to the development of small but practical tools with which to search for golden treasure. Highly efficient metal detectors save hours in locating likely deposits. Also available are portable gold dredges for "underwater gold hunting;" several types of drywashers for desert use; and a very small but effective sluice box. All or any part of this equipment can be easily transported in the family car.

Dredging for gold requires rivers or streams with copious amounts of water. California's Mother Lode Country is typical of regions where this method of recovery proves successful. Requiring water, but in

lesser amounts, a sluice box does the job. In desert areas—a portable drywasher is the answer.

Fortunate are the weekend prospectors who live on or near California's Great Deserts. Separated from the wide coastal basin by towering mountain ranges, the desert land affords opportunities for drywashing while nearby mountains provide suitable streams for a sluice box. Many people spend their weekends working known gold fields. If they persist, and many of them do, their reward will be a vial of flakes and perhaps a nugget or two.

A serious energy crisis confronts our nation. Along with everything else we use for daily living, the price of gasoline is steadily rising. It is time we bring our "travel sights" closer home. Nearly every



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ARIZONA COOK BOOK by Al and Mildred Fischer. This fascinating and unusual five-cookbooks-in-one features recipes for Indian cooking, Mexican dishes, Western specialties, Arizona products and outdoor cooking. Includes sourdough and Indian fried bread recipes, as well as other mouth-watering favorites. Unique collections of hard-to-find Western cooking. Paperback, 142 pages, \$3.00.

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HOW AND WHERE TO PAN GOLD by Wayne Winters. Convenient paperback handbook with information on staking claims, panning and recovering placer gold. Maps and drawings. \$2.50.



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GEM MINERALS OF IDAHO by John Beckwith. Contains information on physical and optical characteristics of minerals; the history, lore, and fashioning of many gems. Also eleven rewarding field trips to every sort of collecting area. Slick paperback, maps and photos, 123 pages, \$3.95.

THE STERLING LEGEND by Estee Conatser. The story of the Lost Dutchman Mine is in a class of its own. Here the author presents the Jacob Walzer story in a realistic and plausible manner. An introduction by Karl von Mueller, and a map insert leaves the reader to draw his own conclusions between fact and fiction. Paperback, illustrated, 98 pages, \$4.00.

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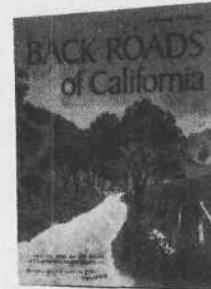
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ON DESERT TRAILS by Randall Henderson, founder and publisher of Desert Magazine for 23 years. One of the first good writers to reveal the beauty of the mysterious desert areas. Henderson's experiences, combined with his comments on the desert of yesterday and today, make this a MUST for those who really want to understand the desert. 375 pages, illustrated. Hardcover, \$7.50.

LOST MINES OF THE GREAT SOUTHWEST by John D. Mitchell. The first of Mitchell's lost mine books is now available after having been out of print for years. Reproduced from the original copy and containing 54 articles based on accounts from people Mitchell interviewed. He spent his entire adult life investigating reports and legends of lost mines and treasures of the Southwest. Hardcover, illustrated, 175 pages, \$7.50.



RAY MANLEY'S SOUTHWESTERN INDIAN ARTS AND CRAFTS is a full color presentation of the culture of the Southwest including jewelry, pottery, baskets, rugs, kachinas, Indian art and sandpaintings. 225 color photographs, interesting descriptive text. Heavy paperback, 96 pages, \$7.95.

LOST MINES & BURIED TREASURES ALONG THE OLD FRONTIER by John D. Mitchell. The second of Mitchell's books on lost mines which was out-of-print for many years. Many of these appeared in DESERT Magazine years ago and these issues are no longer available. New readers will want to read these. Contains the original map first published with the book and one pinpointing the areas of lost mines. Mitchell's personal research and investigation has gone into the book. Hardcover, 240 pages \$7.50.

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FLOWERS OF THE CANYON COUNTRY by Stanley L. Welsh, text; and Bill Ratcliffe, photographs. Brigham Young University Press. Two professionals have united their talents to present an informative, scholarly and artistic promotion of the beauty found in flowers and plants of vast regions of the Southwest. Paperback, 51 pages, \$3.95.

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GUIDEBOOK TO THE COLORADO DESERT OF CALIFORNIA by Choral Pepper. Editor of Desert Magazine for six years, the author has used her research knowledge and first-hand experience to compile this detailed and informative guide to the Colorado Desert. Trips also include historical background. Slick paperback, illustrated, 128 pages, \$2.95.



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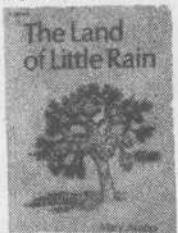


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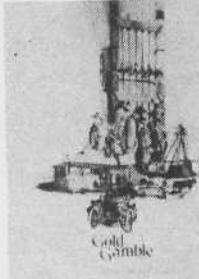
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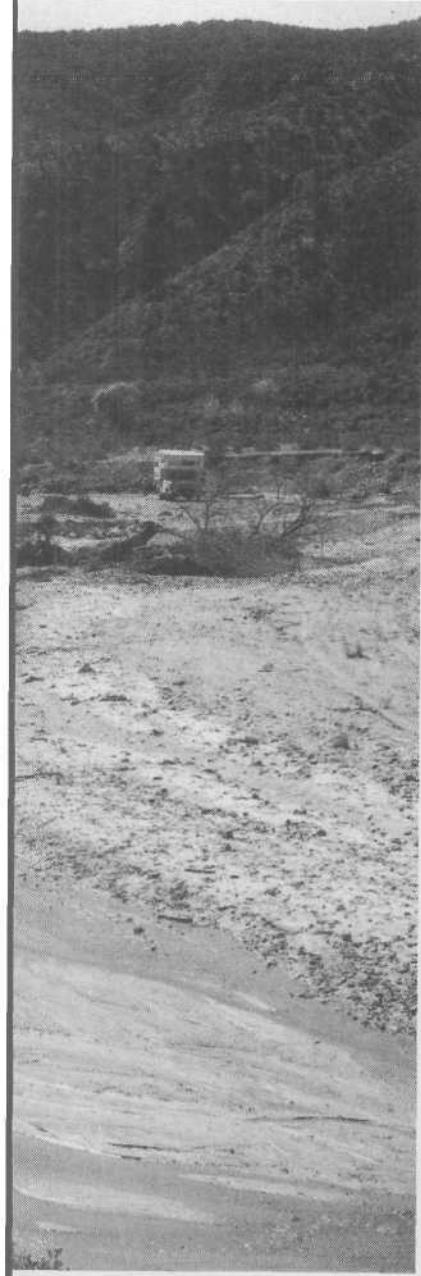
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Left: The gold-bearing terrace [on left] in San Francisquito Canyon is a popular place for gold hunting. There is a great deal of private property in this area and hobbyists must take care to avoid trespassing. Right: A portable drywasher can be used in desert areas or along streams. This modern-day prospector is Victor January of Canoga Park. Below: Even the "small fry" can enjoy gold panning. Several match-head-sized nuggets were recovered by these youngsters.

outdoor hobby can be practiced at locales within 100 to 200 miles of the densely populated Southern California Basin. A fun-filled weekend can be enjoyed by the whole family on a tank or two of gasoline. This holds true for the gold seeker too!

Living on the northern slopes of the San Gabriel Mountains, we are within close proximity to several placer gold deposits. However, outside of a little gold panning, we haven't exploited our local areas. I guess the old saying, "The grass is always greener on the other side of the fence," holds true. We always seem to head for distant horizons.

A good metal detector and gold pan have been our gold hunting tools. This is mainly because there isn't any space left to carry additional gear when we travel.





Above: The "Forty Niner" sluice box consists of nine parts.

It is easily stored and can be set up in a very few minutes.

Below: Placer alluvium has been placed in the top section of the sluice box. Water is bucketed into the top to carry the fines through the grizzly and over the riffles to a padded screen where any coarse or fine gold is caught.

What with camera equipment, mineralight, rock hunting tools, several pets and their paraphernalia—our camper shell and trailer are weighted down. We have to move several items in order to reach any object we may need. Jerry now carefully scrutinizes and generally says "NO" to any new item I deem absolutely essential.

It was with considerable trepidation that I announced we would be taking along a sluice box on our fall trip. "Where in the devil are we going to put it?" my better half roared. When shown the small, compact box, the roar reduced to a grumbling, "Well, O.K., I guess." We were headed for the High Sierras and I planned to sluice while Jerry fished. Unfortunately, rain, then snow were encountered in Owens Valley. The next day, the locale we had planned to visit had two feet of white stuff on the ground!

Early this spring, Jerry suggested we try a little sluicing at our local gold fields. By this time, he had taken the box out and assembled it remarking, "By golly, this is a compact little unit. We will have to see how well it works."

Work it did. Weighing only six pounds, the two-story sluice box called "The Forty Niner" is a sturdy, easily assembled, hard working piece of equipment. We visited several nearby locales and while we didn't strike it rich, we

managed to obtain a little vial of color. Initially, we have only spent a couple of hours at a location. However, as soon as time permits, we plan to do some serious sluicing in several areas which seemed promising.

California's first gold discovery was made in the southern part of the state seven years before the Great Gold Rush of 1849. It was a small placer deposit located in the mountains separating the coastal basin from the Mojave Desert. Aptly named Placerita Canyon, these low-grade deposits were worked for many years by Mexican laborers from Sonoran placer regions. Only six to eight thousand dollars in gold was mined annually—mainly fine grain and small nuggets.

Placer gold was also discovered in San Francisquito, Castaic and Santa Felicia Canyons in the early 1840s. Very primitive mining methods were used, yet over \$100,000 in gold was recovered during the first two years. All of these deposits have been worked intermittently down through the years. However, most of the land is now private property and the hobbyist must obtain permission to work the ground.

A historical marker commemorates the gold discovery in Placerita Canyon—now a Los Angeles County Park. Gold panning is permitted but no other



Right: After a quantity of alluvium has been washed through the sluice box, the material caught behind the riffles and on the padded screen is panned to recover the gold.



equipment is allowed, not even a shovel. The best ground is one mile up the canyon from the picnic grounds. You can hike, or return to the canyon road and drive a mile east to a gate (called Middle Gate). Park here and walk down to the stream. The best time to pan is after high water recedes following a storm. The Park's new museum opened last May and you may wish to stop in when visiting this area. The hours are 9 A.M. to 5 P.M. daily.

There is open ground in San Francisquito Canyon about four miles north of the junction of Bouquet and San Francisquito Roads. Obtain the map mentioned below and be sure you are **not trespassing on private property**.

Placer mining along the East Fork of the San Gabriel River began in the 1880s and considerable gold has been recovered. All of this land was removed from mining entry in 1928. Even so, a small gold rush ensured during the Great Depression of the '30s. Many people were able to find enough gold to keep their families in "bacon and beans."

Today, a one-mile strip extending from Hunter's Camp Williams east to the bridge is open for recreational gold mining. On weekends, many people come to search for the elusive treasure. This is a dandy locale for panning

and sluicing along a beautiful stretch of water. Gold can be found by anyone willing to work for it. "Work" is the keyword here, as it is necessary to hike up a steep trail to the gold-bearing terraces. Then, after filling a bucket or two, they must be hauled down to the river for processing. It is worth all the effort when a tiny nugget or a vial of golden flakes is the end result.

All the areas mentioned above are shown on the U.S. Forest Service Map "The Angelus National Forest," obtainable free from any District Ranger Station. This map shows land status and will aid considerably in avoiding trespass on private property.

These are only a few of the many locales to visit when gold hunting. Nearly every desert canyon will produce a few colors in a drywasher. Goler Gulch (**Desert**, Sept. 1974), Summit Diggings (Nov. 1970), Bonanza Gulch in Last Chance Canyon and the Randsburg Plain are only four of the numerous locales where "gold flakes" can be added to your collection. The Mojave and Colorado Desert regions contain more areas than can be mentioned here. A little research at your local library will give you many other leads.

Gold hunting is a hobby which can be pursued at reasonable expense. Good, easily portable equipment is available at sensible cost. Also, you can build your own, if you are handy at such things.

Prospecting for gold grows on you. After the first success you will be hooked. My better half always says, "I can take it or leave it," but I notice a special gleam lights up his face when gold talk enters the conversation.

"Better plan to head for the Sierras earlier this year so we can give that little sluice box a real workout," he advised me recently. I can see it was a mistake to think I would be sluicing while Jerry fished. I will probably be lucky to even get a turn! Yes, the old gold bug is alive and well at "The Stronghold." Look out High Sierras—here we come gold sluicing!

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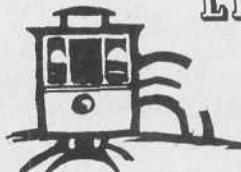
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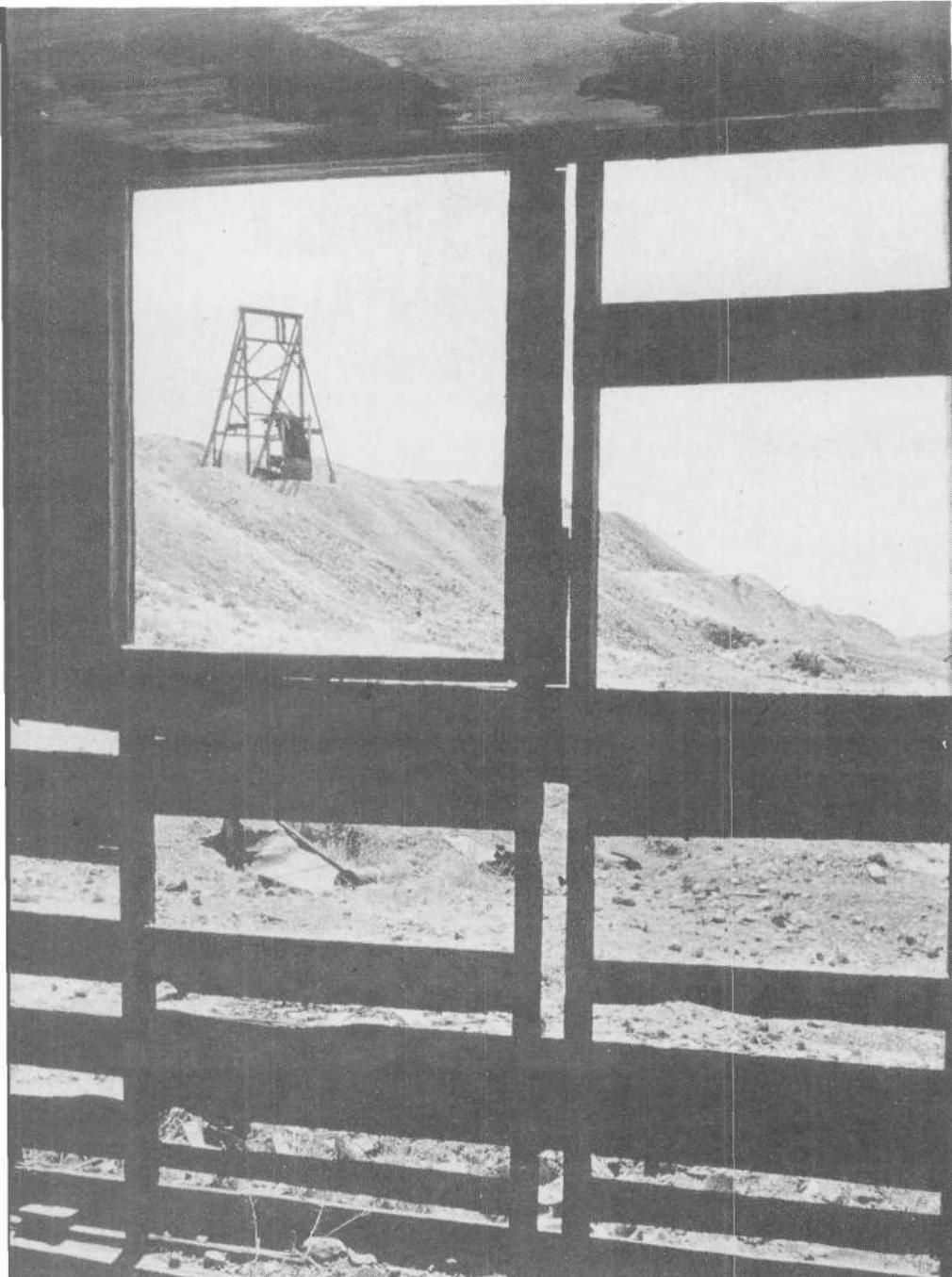
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Above: Doorless safe in foreground may have belonged to one of the three banks once possessed by Rawhide. Stone building was a store of some sort. Mine tunnel enters hill at right.

Left: Old mine headframe stands amidst its tailings, framed in window of a now well-ventilated building.

DUST AND

 PHOTOGRAPHER BY profession, I occasionally take off on dust-choked safaris through the West, seeking out the remnants of the gold and silver rushes of the late 1800s and early 1900s. It's a literal race against time to preserve the last tottering remains of the boom towns and mining camps on film before the elements, fires and vandals erase them from the land completely and there is nothing left to photograph.

As it is, after researching a particular

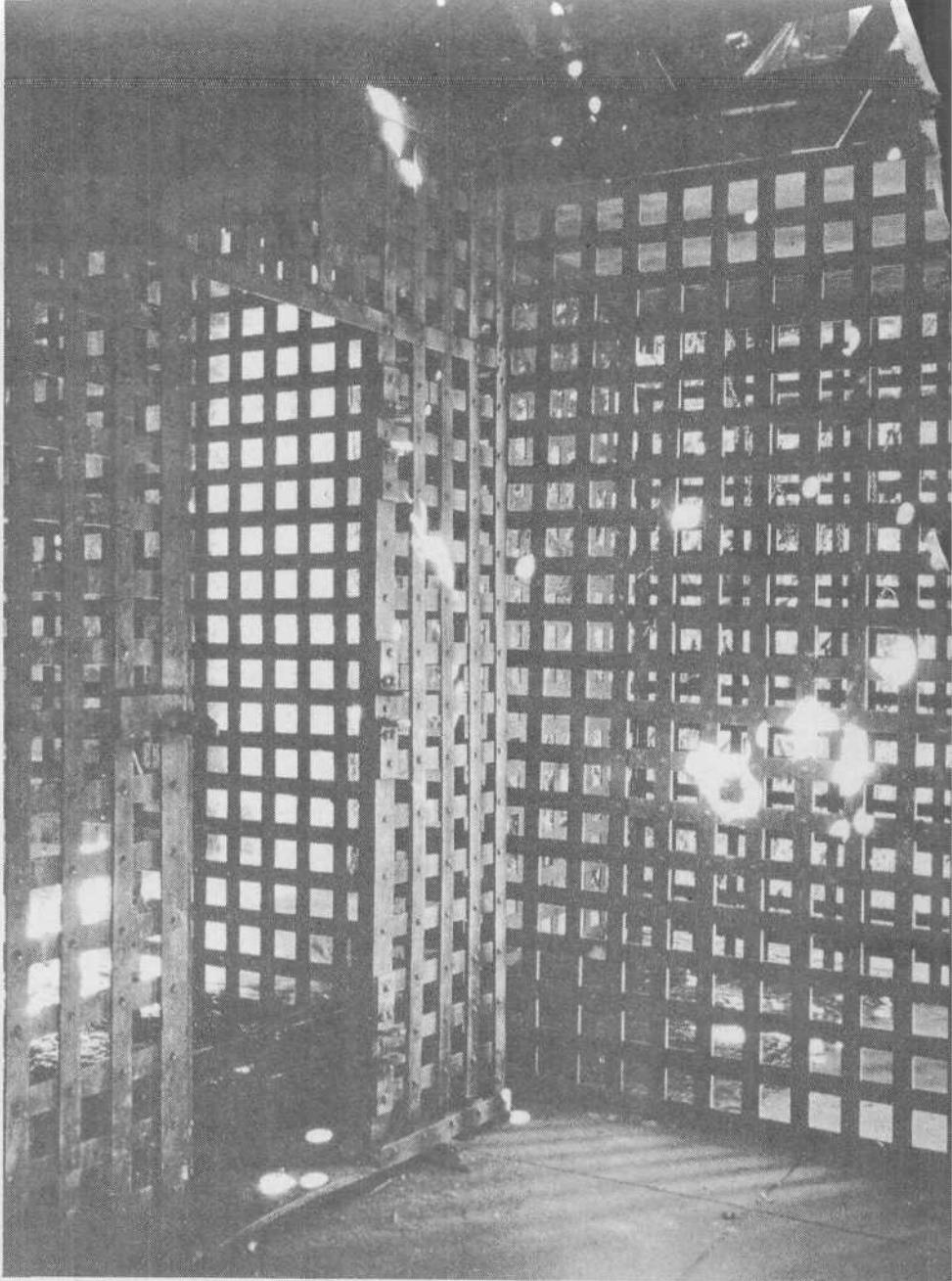
town, and expecting the near equivalent of a Hollywood movie set, far too often upon arrival I find practically nothing left of substance. Rawhide is a case in point. In the various pieces of literature I sifted through, there were several photos of quite photogenic groups of old false-fronted wooden buildings. Unfortunately, the photos weren't dated, and some authors get their information second-hand. At any rate, I decided to track it down, come what may. I proceeded to

the little town of Schurz, on Nevada route 95, at the north end of Walker Lake. My information had indicated that the turn-off I was looking for was at the north edge of town. In actuality, it was an east turn, three miles north of town. Local inquiry produced three different sets of instructions, and I had embarked on and completed a grand tour of the local sagebrush before extracting the correct route from a railroad track crew.

Having found the right turn-off, it's a



Right: Sunlight plays through holes in metal roof of the Rawhide jail. Vandals have removed cell doors, but old mattress springs and, in right cell, wrist manacles, still remain intact.



by DAVE HOWARD

DESOLATION

long, lonely 26 miles (each way) across the flats to Rawhide. Make sure there's air in your spare; it's a long walk to the nearest petrol emporium. The road isn't bad at all, although washboard in several spots during the last few miles. There are a few modern mining operations going on in the vicinity, so the road occasionally feels the leveling influence of a road grader. I negotiated it uneventfully with a 14-year-old-*Thunderbird*, so you shouldn't have any problems unless

you simply couldn't live with the sight of dusty white sidewalls on the family limousine. Only when you actually enter the town does the road get rough, due mainly to the flash floods that over the years have roared through Stingaree Gulch, which forms the main street.

There is so much less left than the old photos had led me to expect, that I drove a couple of miles past the townsite, refusing to believe that the few scattered structures beside the road were what I

had driven 26 miles to see. But after seeing the road disappear over a far horizon, and a search with binoculars revealed no further evidence of a town, I had no choice but to admit that I had arrived. The thought occurred to me that it was a shame that lynchings were out of style now, because I would like to have considered conducting one, with the author of a certain guidebook as the lynch-ee. However, I was determined to salvage something from the long drive,

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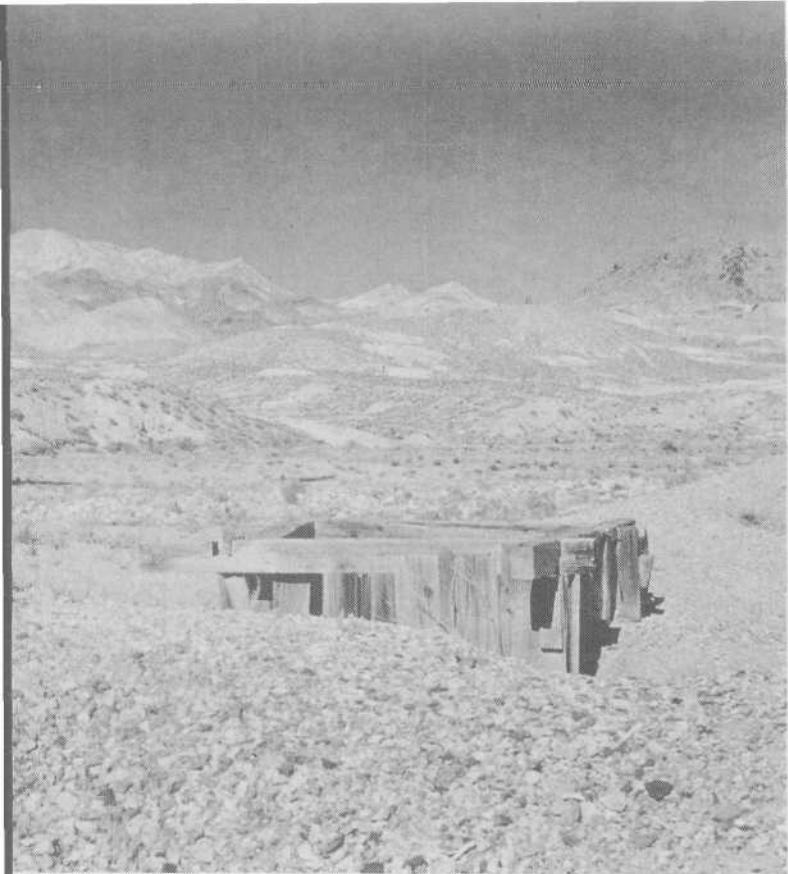
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so I got out and started exploring, in hopes of discovering something missed on my first pass through.

If any town ever spawned the title "middle of nowhere," then Rawhide, Nevada must have been it. The desolation of the setting is complete. Not a single tree in sight. Barely a few blades of dry grass retain a tenacious toehold in the sand and gravel. Not even the preponderance of the ever-present sagebrush is in evidence. All around, everywhere you look, are mound upon mound of tailings from the multitude of mines that were the town's reason for existence in the early 1900's. The mines produced both gold and silver, and the veins were rather shallow, making it easy to get at. Some of the best ore was assayed at \$26,000 to the ton. At the peak of its boom, about 1909, the town played host to a population of 5,000. There were three banks (open 'til midnight), 12 hotels, one each of school, drug store, steam laundry, clothing store, lumber company, post office, jail, and theater, 28 restaurants, 38 saloons, and, fighting an uphill battle, four churches.

Telephone and telegraph lines kept Rawhide in contact with the outside world. A disastrous fire later leveled nine blocks of the business district. Much of it was rebuilt, but the economy never regained its momentum. By then



mining in Nevada had peaked out and was on the decline. Like many gold and silver boom towns of the old west, Rawhide was pumped-up bigger than life by extravagant promotional efforts, and lacked the solid economic base necessary for a more than fleeting existence. As miners and businessmen moved on, seeking greener pastures, ghosts moved in and Rawhide was no more.

After wandering around for a while, your eyes begin to pick out things unnoticed before. Miners' "dug-outs," fashioned into the sides of the hills and faced with stone the same color as the sand and gravel, are camouflaged well from the casual eye. This was the least expensive form of habitation for a prospector still waiting to make a strike. It also had the benefit of being well insulated against the searing heat of summer and the biting cold winds of winter.

Headframes of many mine shafts begin to materialize in the surrounding hills, outlined against the stark blue sky, standing guard over the glory-holes that once drew men from far and wide. Here and there a few modest frame structures still stand, having been spared the ravages of fire and flood that finished their former neighbors, but final collapse is not far off. A doorless safe or two lie rusting in the open, no longer needed to

safeguard the miners' gold dust and nuggets.

The most substantial building left at first doesn't seem very interesting. It is a practically featureless square, constructed of granite blocks, with a corrugated metal roof. The foundation has been threatened from time to time by flood waters rampaging down Stingaree Gulch, but it is still quite solid. Upon closer inspection, though, this characterless gray square turns out to be by far the most rewarding artifact left in Rawhide. As you step inside, through the sagging wooden door, you are greeted by the sight of two heavy strap-iron jail cells. Mattress springs still lie on the floors, and one cell is still complete with wrist manacles. Over in a corner stands a pot-bellied stove, the inmates only defense against the rugged Rawhide winters.

Sunlight plays through holes in the roof, and birds nest in the rafters. Vandals have managed to cart off the doors to the cells, but the rest is intact. After the general let-down of the rest of the town, this find is a relief, and somehow seems to make it all worthwhile again.

On the long drive back to the highway, I enjoyed the total solitude of the area, wishing there was some way to bottle it and take some back to the noisy world that most of us have to endure. □

It would be hard to imagine a more bleak or desolate townsite than that of Rawhide, Nevada. Treeless and arid, except when waters of flash floods roar down Stingaree Gulch, extending behind [actually the front] and off to right of metal-roofed adobe building at left.



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BANDELIER NATIONAL MONUMENT

A WINDOW TO THE PAST

by
CHARLES D. HALE

IN NORTH-CENTRAL New Mexico, a pleasant hour's drive from historic Santa Fe, lies Bandelier National Monument. Within the confines of this beautiful park can be found some of the most colorful and fascinating artifacts of the Keres-speaking Pueblo Indians who inhabited crude cave dwellings carved into the sheer cliff walls some 700 years ago.

Located in the picturesque Jemes (HAY-mes) Mountains, the park consists of 29,600 acres in which have been preserved several centuries of Indian culture and history. The major feature of the park is the long narrow canyon, formed by towering cliff walls that rise

several hundred feet into the sky on either side. It was in this canyon that the original inhabitants carved their homes into the sides of the cliffs and constructed community dwellings on the canyon floor.

Called Pueblos because of their habit of living in closely-clustered communities resembling the *pueblos*, or villages, of Spain, these simple people maintained a compact form of social organization. The manner in which the Pueblos constructed their homes and living quarters is evidence of their fondness for intimate social contact. The ruins that have been preserved in the parksite provide a glimpse of the community life of the Pueblos centuries ago.

Archeological evidence suggests that the Pajarito Plateau, in which Bandelier National Monument is located, was first settled during the 12th century A.D. The area probably reached its population peak sometime between the 14th and 16th centuries. The evidence is not clear, but it appears that a series of misfortunes—crop failure, disease, attacks from warring neighbors—forced the original inhabitants to seek a more favorable location in which to live. By the latter part of the 16th century, only a handful of the original inhabitants remained in the area.

Today the descendants of these peaceful farming people reside in the Cochiti (KOH-chee-tee) Pueblo, located on the west bank of the Rio Grande River, midway between Santa Fe and Albuquerque. Despite the effect of modern con-



Left: Tyuoni was once a large pueblo. Opposite Page: Cave kiva in Frijoles Canyon. Color photo by Robert F. Campbell, Concord, California.





Left: Kiva which was used primarily for religious purposes.
Right: Youngsters exploring the cave rooms carved into sheer cliff walls.



veniences, these people still enjoy a simple style of living, much as their ancestors did before them. Renowned as outstanding artists, craftsmen, and potters, these descendants of the original Bandelier settlers continue to cling to many of the ways of their ancestors.

The early Pueblos who lived in Bandelier left behind them a veritable treasure chest of artifacts and remnants from which the story of their life has been carefully constructed. Thanks largely to the work of a distinguished Swiss-American anthropologist, Adolphe Bandelier,

after whom the park is named, an intensive study of the Pajarito Plateau and the Frijoles Canyon area was initiated in 1880. Today, the scenic grandeur of the landscape, combined with the historic significance of the canyon, make the trip to Bandelier an unforgettable experience.

Among the main points of interest to be found in the park are the following:

Big Kiva [KEE-va] — This underground structure was used by the Pueblos primarily for religious purposes. Kivas also served as training centers for boys and young men, and were occasionally used for healing and curing rites.

Tyuonyi [Tyoo-OWN-yee] — Once a large pueblo or village, the Tyuonyi was three stories high in some places, contained about 400 rooms, and housed as many as 100 persons. Although small by present standards, the rooms were quite comfortable and adequate for the people at that time, who had few furnishings or personal possessions. A model of the Tyuonyi is on display in the Visitor's Center of the park and provides an idea of how the structure actually looked when occupied by the Pueblos.

Cave Rooms — These man-made caves were carved in the sheer cliff walls by the Indians and were used as living quarters. The ceilings have been blackened with smoke from fires which were used for cooking, warmth and lighting. The canyon wall is pockmarked with scores of these cave dwellings.

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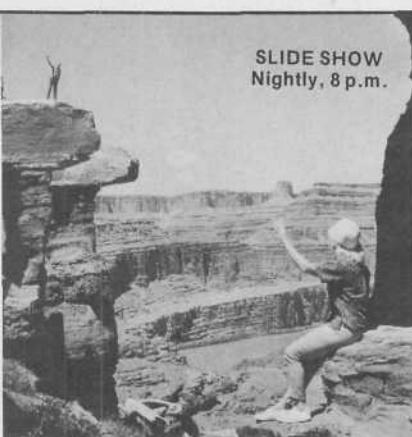
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dwellings can be seen a series of round holes, called viga holes. These man-made holes were cut into the cliff walls to support roof beams. The pattern of these holes indicate that the structures were four stories high in some places, although most consisted of only three levels.

Petroglyphs — These are pictures that were cut into the cliff walls by the Indians, either as artwork, or as a written record of their lives. These pictures, whose exact meanings have not been determined, represent humans, birds, animals, and other symbols of nature.

In order to help the visitor to better appreciate the historic significance of the park, the National Park Service maintains an excellent museum and Visitor Center where displays and slide exhibits provide a general orientation and interpretation of the area. A self-guided walking tour through the principal ruins takes about an hour and is a must for those who are not discouraged by winding trails and rugged terrain.

Guided tours are conducted by the National Park Service six times daily, June through August. To make the tours even more exciting, a limited number of cave dwellings are open to the public for a first-hand glimpse of what life must have been like during the days of the ancient Pueblos. An exploration of the nooks and crannies of the caves is a delight to adults and children alike. However, safety must be stressed at all times, and visitors should be alert not to deface or destroy the cavesites.

A number of enchanting picnic areas are located throughout the canyon, amid the lush green vegetation that flourishes on either side of El Rito de los Frijoles (The Little River of the Beans). Here, in the cool shade of broadleafed aspen and cottonwood trees, amid the pungent fragrance of the spiny juniper, and surrounded by colorful splotches of forget-me-nots, sedges, and alpine larkspur, the visitor may relax and bask in the warm summer sun and refreshing mountain air.

For the outdoor enthusiast, a number of scenic and restful campgrounds, ranging from primitive to modern facilities, are located within an easy drive of Bandelier. Juniper Campground, with nearly 100 trailer and tent sites, is located within the park itself. A \$2.00 camping fee is required.

Nearby, historic Sante Fe, with its tree-shaded patios, brick-paved plaza, and Palace of the Kings, awaits the visitor. Here, amid the old-world charm that characterizes the Land of Enchantment, can be found additional reminders of the Spanish and Mexican influences that shaped the history of the state. Truly, Bandelier National Monument and the surrounding attractions provide an excellent vantage point from which to gain a glimpse of our nation's history. □



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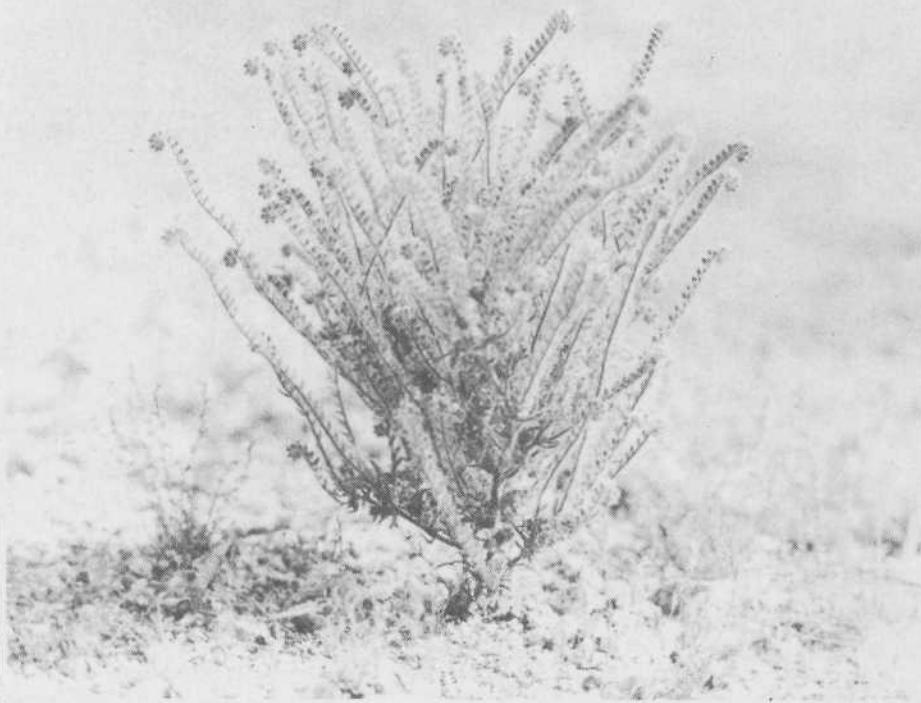
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Desert Plant Life

by JIM CORNETT

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THE FORGET-ME-NOT, of the genus *Cryptantha*, is a common plant found at a wide variety of elevations from below sea-level in Death Valley to over 8,000 feet in Utah.

Other plants are also called forget-me-nots (*Myosotis*), and I will discuss these at a later date. It seems important to stress that common names can be confusing as the same designation is often given to plants or animals that are very dissimilar. Such is the case with the forget-me-nots which can be one of several different genera.

Our subject this month generally tends to be small and slender with many greenish stems arising from a branched root crown. Normally annual, the forget-me-not remains under two feet tall with many species such as the Sulphur-throated Forget-me-not, *Cryptantha flavoulata*, often only four inches high at its tallest.

This spring our yard was covered with hundreds of this herb which blooms for one or two months. Oddly, there were far more plants within the perimeters of our property than outside it. Perhaps the fact that the plot we live on had been disturb-

ed, through bulldozing, reflected some need of *Cryptantha*. Careful attention to roadsides seems to support this observation as many species in this genus abound along the shoulders of desert highways.

Popcorn flower, which members of this genus are often called, is a member of the plant family known to botanists as Boraginaceae, but lets junk this monstrous creation for the time being. Borage Family is much more pronounceable and refers to the same grouping. Borage, bugloss, heliotrope, and coldenia are just a few flowers also found in this plant family, one of which may help you put *Cryptantha* into proper perspective.

Apparently this plant group has not been used as a source of food by man. Ants and small rodents frequently dine upon the seeds, but the stems and leaves are usually left to wilt under the intense summer sun.

Spring is the season to look for these multi-flowered annuals. Dry, disturbed areas seem favored by the erect herbs where competition is lessened and the forget-me-nots may often dominate along our desert trails. □



"A Lonely Desert Wash". Photo by George Service

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IMPOSTORS OF GEM MATERIALS: Green Crucible Buttons

FOR OUR next few columns, we will discuss some of the many things that may be used to imitate gems. Some of these are simple materials made by man, others are more elaborate. Some are other minerals, perhaps being good enough to be a gem in their own right.

To introduce the series, we would like to recount some of our experiences with a material that very few would suspect of being a gem impostor, and thus very few know of it. The impostor is a small blob of glass-like material that is a byproduct of mining operations. We know of it as a crucible button.

To correctly describe a crucible button, we must describe one of the activities of mining. During the operation of a mine, the operator wishes to know at all times the value of the ore he is removing. For this information, he employs a chemist that is known as an assayer.

The assayer, or his assistant, goes at regular intervals into the mine and collects small samples of rock at various points where ore is being removed. At these points, he drives a nail with an attached number that matches the number placed on the sample. (This last statement is not part of our story, but this numbering is important to the operator if he wishes to find the location of any particular sample.)

These samples are taken to the assay office and carefully pulverized into a very fine powder. After a thorough mixing, a portion of the powder is carefully weighed, and then placed into a clay bowl known as a crucible. This is usually

a deep vessel, somewhat resembling a tumbler. Most are about four inches tall with the opening about two inches across. The sides taper down to where the bottom is about one inch inside, and rounded so that a ball of about one inch in diameter would nicely fit into it.

The crucible, with the sample, is put into a small furnace and brought to a very high temperature. Any metals present, such as gold, silver, copper, etc., will easily melt. The remainder of the powdered sample usually melts also. This remainder is mostly quartz, as this mineral makes up about 50 percent of the earth's crust. There are many other materials there also, and most of them melt and help to color the molten rock. Those that do not melt will either float on the molten sample or may sink to the bottom, but they will not mix with the molten metal.

The metal portion of the assay is much heavier than the molten rock, and settles to the bottom of the crucible as a small ball. After cooling, the small mass of glass-like molten rock is broken away, freeing the ball of metal. The metal is weighed, and the assayer can now tell the percentage of metal in the sample.

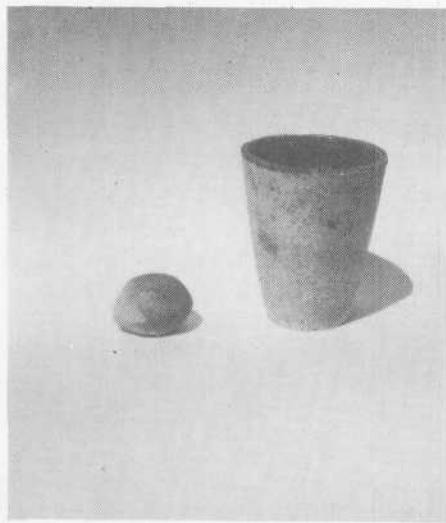
The small mass of previously molten rock is the crucible button and usually resembles a small ball. Nearly always it is coated with a light-colored layer of oxidized or unmelted material. Behind every assay office there is a pile of broken crucibles and these crucible buttons. Some mines, and we suspect one in particular, must have thousands of these buttons.

Our first experience with crucible buttons took place over 30 years ago. We did not know of crucible buttons at the time and were offered a number of these, being told they were tektites. Tektites are also a glass-like material that has moved through outer space. We discussed them in our August, 1972 column. A clear, green type comes only from a single location in Czechoslovakia. These were green and we were delighted to get them.

We cut into some faceted gems, but soon decided that there was something wrong. They were very brittle and would not take a good polish. After the gem was finished, it soon altered on the surface and became frosty. Why this happens we are not certain, but it probably is an oxidation of some of the material

that was not completely molten at the time of the assay.

After some investigation and search, we determined the true nature of our "tektites," but we never have been able to learn the location of the mine that produces the green ones. Whoever is "mining" these keeps it a very dark secret. They are never stated to have come from a mine, let alone an assay office. Some are "found" in small pockets in out of the way places, or as fine examples pick-



Button [left] and crucible.

ed up at random at a gem location. We have seen them offered for sale on many occasions, and a large number have been brought to us for identification. They have masqueraded as other gem materials, as well as tektites. Quite commonly they have been called obsidian, which is not very different from a tektite. However, we have never seen green obsidian and do not believe it exists. We shall discuss "green obsidian" stories in our next column.

A very logical gem material for crucible buttons to imitate is the popular gem peridot. This has evidently happened on a number of occasions. One of our most interesting experiences with crucible buttons concerned its being called peridot.

At a gem show in the fairly recent past, we were introduced to a man in order that he might show us the very "unusual" piece of gem material that he had. As soon as it was handed to us we knew what it was. If it had been a peridot, it certainly would have been very excellent. No amount of talking on our part could sway the man in his belief that he had anything but peridot. We pointed

out such things as the shape, the light-colored coating, and the internal swirl lines and bubbles. We will admit that the shape could remotely have been possible for peridot, and on occasions it does have a yellowish to reddish coating. It never has swirl marks or bubbles, but our informant insisted that we were looking through the piece and mistaking the other side for bubbles and swirl marks.

Questioning the man as to how he knew for certain that it was peridot drew some interesting answers. First, the piece did not belong to him. It had been given to him to cut into a gem, thus he was quoting the owner's information. We were told that a refractive index had been taken, and it was that of peridot. In order to determine the refractive index of any material, it must have a perfectly flat polished surface. We did not see any flat surface, thus we concluded that no refractive index was ever taken. We were given names of well-known individuals and institutions that had identified it. Our experience with quotations of experts has been very disconcerting; many times, the experts have never seen the article, and we were sure this was the case here.

Experiences such as these sadden us for always someone is being misled. As a result, this person will usually spend money and/or time on something that is probably worthless.

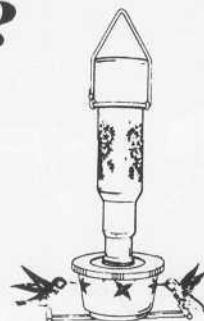
Very recently, one of our students visited a gem show where he observed the workings of the mineral and gem identification booth. The person that was operating the booth was well trained, but as events showed, had never seen a crucible button.

One was brought in for identification, being hopefully represented as green opal. We had never heard of it imitating opal before! It was identified as a tektite, which we can readily understand under the circumstances. Our student sensed something wrong, but could not be sure.

Later, he described the incident to us. During his description of the material, which was perfect, we went to our supply of crucible buttons and showed him one. He recognized it immediately.

It took us 30 years, but our experiences with crucible buttons has come full circle back to tektite. Now if we could only learn where these nice green ones come from, our education should be complete. □

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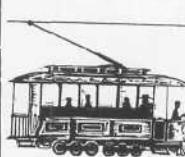
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THE BLACK WIDOW

Continued from Page 19

fully as he came. Any misstep could cost him his life.

As the male approaches the silken threads of his prospective bride, he gently tugs them. This seems a special signal which lets the female know a groom is coming aboard. Mating is brief, the male fertilizing the female, then follows his treacherous tightrope walk to safety. If he isn't too taken with the whole affair, he'll make it off the web. Occasionally, however, he makes a misstep, alarming the female who hastily gobble him up. Some honeymoon!

The female subsequently deposits from 300-500 eggs wrapped in a silken cocoon. The cocoon forms a protective covering around the eggs, preventing predation upon the maturing young. The silk used in cocoon making is amazingly strong, having a tensile strength greater than steel. The youngsters emerge in about 30 days, striking out on their own immediately. They look nothing like their parents, often being brightly colored and marked. They are poisonous, but because of their small size and even smaller fangs, are of no danger at this point in their lives. It is at this time when the spiders move about looking for a suitable home. They are so small they have little difficulty in squeezing under doorways or crawling through insect screens. In most instances black widows enter homes when they are small, maturing in about six months to larger adult size.

The black widow web is certainly nothing for any self-respecting spider to be proud. It's a messy, low-to-the-ground affair, one thread going off in one direction and a second leading off in another. The widow isn't picky, however, and besides, the cross-hatched structure works. Insects always litter the webbing, all of which are neatly bound up, waiting their turn to be drained of their body fluids. Even though the female spider possesses a highly neurotoxic venom, most effective in subduing prey, she prefers to tie up her victims before giving the lethal dose. When a meal becomes tangled in the lines, she quickly begins throwing loops of thread around and around the struggling morsel. Tiny "combs" at the end of her fourth pair of legs facilitates this flinging of thread. The insect is soon

helplessly tied up and ready (but not willing) to receive the fatal nip from the widow's fangs or chelicera as they are called by scientists. She then backs off, waiting for the venom to take effect. When movement has ceased she returns to suck out the fluid content of the lifeless animal.

The body moisture of the widow's victims provides sufficient water for her survival in the dryness of her desert home. When times are tough, there not being any insects about, she will retire deeper into her home and fast for several weeks or even months if necessary. During this period, her health deteriorates, the abdomen shrinking considerably, but she is still able to capture food should things pick up. A summer cloudburst or the onset of spring usually brings relief.

All forms of wildlife have enemies and the black widow is no exception. Modern man, of course, does not hesitate in ridding his dwelling of this dangerous spider. However, primitive man saw the black widow as a useful object. Dr. C. Hart Merriman, chief of the U. S. Biological Survey from 1885-1910, discovered that certain southwestern Indian tribes used the venom of the black widow to poison arrow tips. The spiders would be collected, then mashed together, the arrow being rubbed in the messy concoction. Needless to say, it worked.

Southwestern Indians making poisoned arrows are certainly not the only predators of the black widow. She must contend with a host of lizard species that would like nothing better than to add a relatively large, juicy spider to their menu. Most notable of the lizard predators are the large alligator lizards (*Gerrhonotus sp.*) which especially relish the widows. Biologist Sherman Minton has found some evidence to suggest that lizards may be immune to the venom's effects.

The praying mantis will also consume her if she's not careful. Apparently, the mantis is protected from her deadly bite by his thick exoskeleton.

All in all, it seems our lady friend has few redeeming qualities. She does consume about 2000 pesky insects in her brief life, but then so do many other less dangerous spiders. When it comes down to it, she really hasn't many friends. In fact, she's about as unpopular as a girl can get! □

Letters to the Editor

Letters requesting answers must include stamped self-addressed envelope

Murals Explained . . .

I have just received the September issue and read the letter from Frank W. Ellis concerning the "murals" in Chloride Canyon.

My wife and I are history buffs and we were traveling through Arizona on one of our history tours. We stopped in Chloride for some photos, and in order to identify the buildings and sites we inquired about them at a little bar. The proprietor was very helpful and in the course of our conversation, told us of the "murals." Then, in true western hospitality, he piled us in his pickup and took us to the site. The "murals" are truly remarkable. The color transparencies I took can verify this.

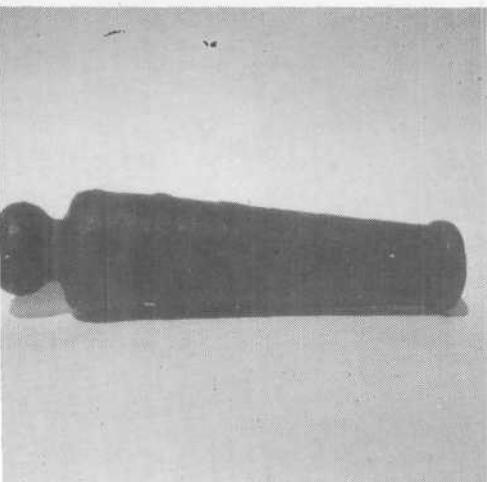
The story the proprietor told us was that the Curator of the Museum in Flagstaff came out there and painted the pictures as a hobby. Some of the paintings were abstract, some had an Indian motif, and one large mural pictured the "Destruction of Chloride!" All beautiful.

The murals have been there for several years. Our trip was in 1969.

FOREST M. BROWN,
Sacramento, California.

Query for Old Gun Buffs . . .

Enclosed is a picture of what appears to be a small cannon I found in the desert 15 years ago, south of Desert Hot Springs, California. It is six inches long with a half-inch bore. It appears very old and is a rough casted iron.



I have often wondered what it might have been used for. One suggestion has been that it is a "salute" cannon. Maybe one of your readers can tell more about it.

TERRY GRAFFAM,
Palm Desert, California.

Desert Willow . . .

We enjoyed your article of the desert willow being a catalpa, as we have always called it a desert willow. Enclosed is a picture of our tree which blooms constantly from May through September. This tree has beans just as the catalpa trees do.



One side note of interest. We have a turtle that lives in a low juniper at the foot of the tree where it finds the blossoms wonderful food.

J. D. SHARP, M.D.,
Twentynine Palms, California.

Enjoyed August Cover . . .

I was very interested to find Quanah Parker's picture on the August, 1975 *Desert Magazine*.

A friend of mine, Grace M. Jackson (Mrs. Clyde Jackson), has written a book on Quanah Parker's mother, Cynthia Ann Parker. The book is titled, "Cynthia Ann Parker", and is published by Naylor Press of San Antonio, Texas.

It contains the life story of Cynthia Ann, her early childhood, her capture, her life with the Comanche, her return to civilization and death. There are pictures of Quanah, his children and three wives, and other pictures of him including one where he is standing beside his mother's picture, the only picture ever made of her.

I enjoyed this book very much, and with the fall cover in color of Quanah Parker, it will mean even more to me.

NANCY LEE CARMICHAEL,
Fullerton, California.

Calendar of Events

SEPTEMBER 28-OCTOBER 20, Saddeback Western Art Gallery presents an exhibit of American Wildlife paintings by Gare Barks, Gene Diekhoner, Penny Edwards, Beebee Hopper, Gene Knight, Martha M. Nelson, Nancy Turner Rea and Donna Day Westernman. Santa Ana Freeway and First St., Santa Ana, Calif., 92701.

OCTOBER 3-5, Fourth Annual "Rough Run" in Afton Canyon, sponsored by the Pasadena Free Wheelers. Registration, \$7.50 donation. For details write: Jerry Wendt, 326 E. Colorado, Arcadia, Calif. 91006.

OCTOBER 4 & 5, Bisbee Mineral Show, sponsored by the Bisbee Gem & Mineral Club, National Guard Armory, Bisbee, Arizona. Exceptional displays, special programs.

OCTOBER 7-19, 22nd Annual Show of the Fresno Gem & Mineral Society, Inc., held in conjunction with the Fresno District Fair, Kings Canyon Rd., Fresno, Calif. Chairman: Montie Wheat, 1565 No. Pacific Avenue, Fresno, Calif. 93728.

OCTOBER 10-12, 3rd Annual Tucson Lapidary and Gem Show, sponsored by the Old Pueblo Lapidary Club, Inc., Tucson Community Center Exhibition Hall, 350 South Church St., Tucson, Arizona. Dealers. Chairman: Marion Poulson, P. O. Box 2163, Tucson, Arizona 85702.

OCTOBER 11 & 12, Annual Meeting of the World-of-Rockhounds Association, at campsite located about 2 miles east of Clay Mine Road near Boron, California. Displays, evening campfire, entertainment, field trips. Contact: Mrs. Carol Mahr, 27419 FawnSkin Drive, Palos Verdes, California.

OCTOBER 18 & 19, 26th Annual Gem Show presented by the Whittier Gem & Mineral Society, Palm Park, 5703 S. Palm Avenue, Whittier, California 90608.

OCTOBER 19, Cactus and Succulent Show sponsored by the Sunset Succulent Society, Marine Park Center, 1406 Marine St., Santa Monica, California. Admission free. Call Shirley Goss, 213-822-7081.

OCTOBER 25 & 26, 7th Annual Fall Photo-history Fair featuring antique and classic cameras, sponsored by the Western Photographic Collectors Assoc., Pasadena City College, 1570 Colorado Blvd., Pasadena, Calif. Admission \$1.50, students \$1.00.

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